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Promoting and facilitating the implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests

Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

The present report describes the many ways in which countries, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and major groups have become actively engaged in the implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF). The sheer volume of these activities is impressive, and shows the degree to which the many interested parties have been engaged in and have taken note of the outcome of the IPF process. These have been further encouraged by a number of references to the outcome of IPF and endorsement of the Panel's proposals for action by major international and intergovernmental forums, and by increasingly consistent instructions on forests to intergovernmental organizations from their governing bodies.

A large number of countries, both developing and developed, are in the process of reviewing their forest policies and their national forest programmes in the context of IPF conclusions and proposals for action. The focus on national forest programmes as a generic expression of a wide variety of initiatives by all countries and for all types of forests has led to a situation in which much wider participation has been achieved concerning tropical, temperate and boreal forests, in terms of engage ent by both

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developed and developing countries. At the same time, however, many countries, particularly the least developed countries with low cover of forest and other wooded land, have not received adequate international support for their forest-related activities. The main avenues of support to national forest programmes of the past no longer exist, and new and innovative mechanisms will have to be created. The establishment of mainstream, decentralized, flexible and reliable support mechanisms represents a major challenge for the international community.

Information on the implementation of IPF proposals for action carried out by international, regional organizations and under existing instruments is also presented in the report of the Secretary-General in programme element II.e.(i) (E/CN.17/IFF/1998/5).

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INTRODUCTION

A. Mandate

1. The present report covers programme element I.a of the programme of work of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests, "Promoting and facilitating the implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests".

2. Work under programme element I.a is guided by the Forum's decision at its first session that this programme element should promote and facilitate implementation, by, for example, considering the launching of programmes by countries, United Nations agencies, other international organizations and major groups to implement all proposals for action developed by IPF; and considering appropriate mechanisms for the mobilization of financial resources, institutional and human resources and capacity-building, paying particular attention to the role of women (see E/CN.17/IFF/1997/4, para. 7, category I).

B. Scope

3. The present report, which has been prepared by the IFF secretariat, is based on inputs received from member organizations of the informal, high-level Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests (ITFF): the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity; the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR); the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO); the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the Department for Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat; the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); and the World Bank.

4. The nature of the present report is almost by definition a "good news story" since it reflects a mandate to consider the launching of programmes. It describes the many ways in which countries, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and major groups have become actively engaged in the implementation of the IPF proposals for action. The sheer volume of these activities is impressive, and shows the degree to which the many interested parties have been engaged in and have taken note of the outcome of the IPF process. It should not, however, be seen as part of a systematic reporting framework, which will only emerge as progress is made under IFF programme element I.b.

5. The present report describes the endorsements of the IPF proposals for action, the highlights of implementation activities to date and the assessment of recent developments; and identifies the major issues that IFF may wish to address at its second session, including specific policy measures and preliminary proposals for action.

I. ENDORSEMENTS OF THE PROPOSALS FOR ACTION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON FORESTS

6. The intergovernmental policy dialogue on forests and the proposals for action of IPF have stimulated a number of initiatives and activities around the world, which have been further encouraged by a number of references to the outcome of IPF and endorsement of the Panel's proposals for action by major international and intergovernmental forums, including the fifth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development; the FAO Committee on Forestry; the Commonwealth Forestry Association; the Eleventh World Forestry Congress; the Edinburgh Meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government; the Commonwealth Forestry Conference; the Versailles meeting organized by the High Council of Forests and Forest Products of France; the International Tropical Timber Council; the Fourth Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity; the Group of Eight Major Industrialized Countries (G-8) summit at Birmingham and the G-8 Action Programme on Forests; and the Third Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe.

7. Other indirect effects of the outcome of the IPF process include:

(a) Increasingly consistent instructions on forests to intergovernmental organizations from their governing bodies;

(b) Strengthening international networks among foresters, including anglophone, francophone and lusophone foresters' associations;

(c) Increased attention to the valuation of forest services, which took a leap forward when the Fourth Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held at Kyoto, Japan, in December 1997, decided to recognize the significant role of forests as a carbon sink.

II. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSALS FOR ACTION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON FORESTS

8. A large number of countries, both developing and developed - including Canada, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Finland, Switzerland, Costa Rica, Indonesia, Honduras, Uganda and many others - are in the process of reviewing their forest policies and their national forest programmes in the context of the IPF conclusions and proposals for action.

9. The international donor community, in particular the Forestry Advisers Group, has made efforts to structure international cooperation related to forests in support of the IPF proposals for action. The Forestry Advisers Group has agreed to place a high priority on supporting national forest programmes.

10. The G-8 Action Programme on Forests, announced on 9 May 1998, contains priority activities and support programmes in support of the IPF proposals for action that will be carried out jointly or individually by G-8 members in such areas as monitoring and assessment; national forest programmes; protected areas; the private sector; and illegal logging.

11. There are also several government-sponsored initiatives organized in support of IPF proposals for action and IFF activities, including:

(a) The six-country initiative on the theme "Putting the IPF proposals for action into practice at the national level", in support of programme element I.a of the IFF programme of work, which is sponsored by the Governments of Finland, Germany, Honduras, Indonesia, Uganda and the United Kingdom, in cooperation with the IFF secretariat, UNDP and FAO;

(b) The International Consultation on Research and Information Systems in Forestry (ICRIS), which is sponsored by Indonesia and Austria in cooperation with the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations (IUFRO), CIFOR, FAO and the IFF Secretariat;

(c) The Non-Governmental Organizations/Government of Costa Rica initiative on underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation, to be hosted by Costa Rica and organized by non-governmental organizations and the Government of Costa Rica, in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme.

12. The members of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests (ITFF) have prepared an implementation plan entitled "Inter-agency partnership on forests: implementation of IPF proposals for action by ITFF".

13. FAO has organized three regional workshops on the implementation of IPF proposals for action related in particular to national forest programmes, at Yogyakarta, Indonesia, in February 1998; at Dakar, in April 1998; and at Santiago, in June 1998.

14. World Bank initiatives include activities under the recently created World Bank-World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Alliance; a series of meetings convened by the President of the Alliance between forest industry chief executive officers and environmental organizations; participation as an active member of Forest Trends (formerly the Forest Market Transformation Initiative); and strengthening the role of the World Bank in the IFF/ITFF process.

15. UNDP has initiated implementation of its new programme entitled "Global programme on forests", which will concentrate on the implementation of IPF proposals for action. The pilot phase is being launched with the involvement of Costa Rica, Cameroon, Guyana and Viet Nam.

16. The International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC) has authorized the Executive Director of ITTO to undertake the necessary studies, within the scope of its mandate, to support the IFF process and the implementation of the IPF proposals for action.

17. Several regional and eco-regional processes on criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management continue to be active and to further refine their approaches and implementation.

18. Several countries, the private sector and a number of non-governmental organizations are engaged in evaluating existing voluntary mechanisms for forest products certification.

19. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization has formed the Wood Industries Advisers Group, with an industrial orientation modelled to some extent after the Forestry Advisers Group.

III. ASSESSMENT OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

A. Progress through national forest and land-use programmes

20. The focus on national forest programmes as a generic expression of a wide variety of country-led and country-driven initiatives by all countries and for all types of forests has led to a situation in which much wider participation has been achieved concerning tropical, temperate and boreal forests, in terms of engagement by both developed and developing countries, as for example in the so-called six-country initiative, and as reflected by the significant number of industrialized countries currently engaged in putting IPF proposals for action into practice at the national level.

21. At the same time, however, many countries, particularly the least developed countries with low forest cover and other wooded land, have been left with very inadequate international support for their forest-related activities. The post-United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) period saw official development assistance (ODA) in support to national forest programmes reaching a peak in 1993, with significant reductions ever since, even taking into account forestry components in rural development programmes. Financial and technical support for developing countries with low forest cover is less likely to be satisfactory.

22. The three regional workshops organized by FAO in Asia and the Pacific, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as recent meetings of the Forestry Advisers Group, have shown that some of the main avenues of support to national forest programmes of the past no longer exist, and that new and innovative mechanisms will have to be created. The establishment of mainstream, decentralized, flexible and reliable support mechanisms represent a major challenge for the international community.

B. Underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation

23. Considerable new and comprehensive information on the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation is expected to become available as a result of the work and final report of the World Commission on Forests and Sustainable Development; the planned UNEP reports entitled: "In-depth analysis of underlying causes and their regional variances of deforestation and forest degradation", and "Strategic and policy options to address the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation", as well as the non-governmental organizations/Government of Costa Rica initiative on underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation, to be hosted by Costa Rica and organized by non-governmental organizations and the Government of Costa Rica, in cooperation with UNEP.

24. The conclusions of this global workshop will be reflected in UNEP's inputs to the Secretary-General's report for the third session of IFF.

C. Traditional forest-related knowledge

25. The recent decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its fourth meeting, held at Bratislava in May 1998, address important issues related to traditional forest-related knowledge, namely:

(a) Decision IV/7, in which the Conference adopted a programme of work on forest biological diversity;

(b) Decision IV/9, in which the Conference established an ad hoc open-ended inter-sessional working group on the implementation of article 8 (j);

(c) Decision IV/8 on matters related to benefit sharing, in which the Conference established a panel of experts appointed by Governments, composed of representatives from the private and public sectors, as well as representatives of indigenous and local communities;

(d) Decision IV/15 on the relationship of the Convention with the Commission on Sustainable Development and biodiversity-related conventions, other international agreements, institutions and processes of relevance;

(e) Decision IV/9, in which the Conference invited the World Intellectual Property Organization to take into account the lifestyles and the traditional systems of access and use of the knowledge, technologies and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles.

D. Fragile ecosystems affected by desertification and drought

26. The overall situation reflects only a limited number of new initiatives. It should be noted, however, that significant activities are already ongoing in many countries and are included in the programmes of several international organizations. Some collaborative activities are under negotiation between the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa and United Nations agencies, such as FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

27. In countries affected by desertification and drought, national action to address issues related to dryland forest ecosystems have been reinforced by parallel processes centred on (a) developments related to sustainable forest management; (b) the implementation of the above-mentioned Convention; (c) national environmental planning; and (d) various regional/national planning frameworks supporting development, village land resources management and natural resources development.

28. Several initiatives have been taken at the country level regarding analysis of past experience, education, training, extension, participatory research, local knowledge, participatory management in the framework of the revision of their policies.

29. The strengthening of partnerships between local communities, the Government, non-governmental organizations and other groups, one of the key components of the implementation of the Convention, is already under way in each country engaged in the national action plan exercise, very often supported by international organizations.

E. Impact of airborne pollution on forests

30. The fourteenth meeting of the Task Force of the Economic Commission for Europe International Cooperative Programme on the Assessment and Monitoring of Air Pollution Effects on Forests (ICP Forests) was held in May 1998. Results and conclusions of the annual report on forest conditions in Europe of the ECE Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, published in June 1998, were not available at the time of preparation of the present report.

31. No new national strategies for the prevention of airborne pollution damaging trees or the reduction of damaging transboundary pollution have been developed. There is, however, a new draft European Union regulation on sulphur emissions.

32. The work of ICP Forests has continued, involving European and North American countries. Notable progress has been made in the translation of theory into practice in terms of the critical loads approach.

F. Needs and requirements of developing and other countries with low forest cover

33. Work has been initiated by UNEP on analysing available definitions of low forest cover (LFC). This work, considered by IUFRO in collaboration with FAO, will develop a definition of low forest cover and a revised list of countries with low forest cover based on the revised definition of low forest cover. UNEP will also facilitate an inter-agency consultation to discuss the definition of low forest cover and the revised list. The outcome of all these activities will be included in UNEP's input to the Secretary-General's report for substantive discussions at the third session of IFF.

G. Financial assistance

34. Despite the increasing trend of private capital flows to developing countries, the decline in official international capital flow is a matter of serious concern because long-term development aid catalyses and complements private-sector investments (for further details, see E/CN.17/IFF/1998/7).

H. Technology transfer and capacity-building and information

35. Implementation of sustainable forest management has been slow in many countries, partly due to insufficient awareness and appreciation of the potential benefits that can be derived from the use of environmentally sound and socially acceptable technologies. There have been insufficient efforts in the area of comprehensive assessment of technology generation and needs (for further details, see E/CN.17/IFF/1998/4).

I. Assessment of the multiple benefits of all types of forests

36. A number of national and subregional capacity-building workshops and expert consultations have been held or are scheduled to take place. These will contribute to the quality of national-level forest resource assessments and for the forest resources assessment by the year 2000 (FRA 2000).

37. A revision is planned of the FAO forest inventory manual. Through advances in geographical information systems and remote-sensing technology, under FRA 2000 techniques are being developed for assessing forests available for wood supply and deforestation processes in developing countries.

38. Memoranda of understanding have been developed between FAO and a number of key international organizations, countries and other organizations with competence in assessments to contribute to FRA 2000, and to share the results of the assessment effectively with the international community. A global strategic plan for global forest resources assessments has been developed.

39. A core set of harmonized definitions for forest and related aspects of forests has been developed for global reporting of FRA 2000 and progress made on the harmonization of definitions for forestry within FAO and external cooperators, such as the World Conservation Monitoring Centre, the European Union and the World Bank. IUFRO is proposing to sponsor a forum to address the issue of information systems. Progress is being made in the collection of core set of information on a broad range of forest values, including non-timber values for all developing and industrialized countries.

40. It remains clear that in many cases, developing countries need technical and financial assistance to enhance their capacity to conduct forest resources assessments, and to use such information for policy and planning of sustainable forest management.

41. Several components of FRA 2000 are still unfunded, in particular the remote-sensing programme, for which no extrabudgetary resources have been received.

J. Forest research

42. Renewal and redefinition is needed in forest science. A work plan for a new international network on forest research may be modelled on the research agenda presented and discussed during the IPF process. The Austria-Indonesia

initiative (ICRIS) has commissioned papers to review and synthesize the state of knowledge in particular areas, and to produce comprehensive reports that also identify gaps to be filled by further interdisciplinary research.

43. The new broad international concern of societies about forest issues requires a re-examination of forest research institutions. What kind of new approaches and new alliances are needed now and for the future? How research is conducted is as important as what research is done.

44. The ICRIS meeting sponsored by Austria and Indonesia is intended to produce much more than a "shopping list of worthy research topics" according to today's perception of what is needed and what is possible. It aims to engage participants in an informal exchange of ideas and to build consensus. Exploration of an appropriate mechanism to disburse international funds to support high-priority, collaborative research activities is also a major focus of the agenda at the ICRIS meeting.

K. Methodologies for the proper valuation of the multiple benefits of forests

45. The Kyoto Protocol under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change has provided a major incentive for countries to engage in the valuation of forests as carbon sinks. There is also growing recognition of the need to quantify services provided by forests in such areas as biological diversity, water and ecotourism. The World Bank will prepare inputs related to this topic under IFF programme element II.d for the substantive discussion at the third session of IFF, in May 1999.

L. Criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management

46. Since UNCED, about 100 countries have participated in international processes aimed at the definition of criteria to characterize sustainable forest management. Such criteria have proven to be useful tools in country-driven efforts to incorporate a wide array of forest-related considerations within a common conceptual framework. Corresponding indicators are also under development to help define these criteria quantitatively and qualitatively; enable countries to analyse and monitor the effects of forest management interventions over time; and improve forestry practices to meet defined country-level goals, as well as international commitments.

47. Interest in the development, testing and implementation of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management has steadily grown, as evidenced by the dynamic activities carried out within the framework of a number of currently ongoing regional and eco-regional initiatives.

48. Forest management unit-level or operational-level criteria and indicators have been developed to complement national criteria and indicators within the framework of a number of the international initiatives mentioned above, including the ITTO guidelines, the Pan-European process, the Tarapoto proposal, the Central American process of Lepaterique, and to a lesser extent, the Near

East and the Dry Zone Africa processes. CIFOR has been leading the work of testing criteria and indicators at the forest management unit level, and has conducted innovative work on social indicators in a number of countries.

49. Sustained support is needed to help countries that are currently not actively participating in the international criteria and indicators initiatives to undertake this activity, particularly countries with low forest cover or with significant areas of "other wooded land".

50. Increased efforts are urgently needed in country-level implementation of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. Countries that have advanced in respect to implementation should be encouraged to share their experiences and to assist others.

51. Strengthened efforts are needed by the countries concerned to ensure the compatibility of criteria and indicators implemented at the national level and those being developed at the forest management unit level.

M. Trade and environment in relation to forest products and services

52. Recent developments may pose both new opportunities for and challenges to sustainable forest management; such developments include illegal trade, species extinction, recent market trends and their implications for sustainable forest management, and international obligations and agreements (for further details, see E/CN.17/IFF/1998/3).

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

53. It should be noted that in several cases, the conclusions and proposals for action set out below are not new but only reflect a need to focus on particular aspects of the proposals for action of IPF in the light of the experiences gained since February 1997.

A. Progress through national forest and land-use programmes

Conclusions

54. There is now an intergovernmental consensus on the need for comprehensive forest policy frameworks or national forest programmes, including the tropical, temperate and boreal forest regions, and engagement by all countries. In addition to many developing countries, a significant number of industrialized countries are currently engaged in putting the IPF proposals for action into practice at the national level through a revision of their national forest programme.

55. Some of the main avenues of the past international support to the formulation and implementation of national forest programmes in developing countries no longer exist, and new and innovative mechanisms will have to be

created. The establishment of mainstream, decentralized, flexible and reliable support mechanisms, in particular for the least developed countries with low forest cover, represent a major challenge for the international community.

Preliminary proposals for action

56. The Forum may wish to:

(a) Encourage all countries to continue implementation of the IPF proposals for action in the context of their revised national forest programmes;

(b) Urge the international donor community and international organizations to further develop mainstream financial and technical assistance mechanisms for support to national forest programmes in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in particular in countries with low forest cover and fragile forest ecosystems;

(c) Encourage countries and international organizations to analyse potential synergies at the national level between national forest programmes and requirements under the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and other instruments;

(d) Urge countries and international organizations to create and/or strengthen partnership agreements to encourage long-term political commitment and relevant, effective, sustained and reliable donor support; to facilitate participation by the private sector and major groups; and to recognize the special role of ODA in meeting the needs of countries with low forest cover where the private sector is less likely to invest.

B. Underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation

57. The conclusions of the expert meeting co-sponsored by non-governmental organizations, the Government of Costa Rica and UNEP on underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation will be reflected in UNEP's inputs to the Secretary-General's report on this topic for substantive discussion at the third session of IFF.

C. Traditional forest-related knowledge

58. In accordance with decision IV/7 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Executive Secretary of the Convention, in implementing the work programme on forest biological diversity, will actively continue collaboration and cooperation with the IFF secretariat and relevant institutions. In this regard, the Executive Secretary of the Convention is requested to transmit decision IV/7 of the Conference of Parties to IFF at its second session.

D. Fragile ecosystems affected by desertification and drought

Conclusions

59. Although only a limited number of new initiatives have been launched since the IPF process, a significant number of activities are already ongoing in many countries, which are included in the programmes of several international organizations in the context of the implementation of the desertification Convention.

Preliminary proposals for action

60. The Forum may wish to:

(a) Encourage the close coordination of activities related to national forest programmes with the implementation of the United Nations conventions on climate change, biological diversity and - especially - combating desertification;

(b) Consider the special needs for forest-related ODA of countries affected by desertification and drought.

E. Impact of airborne pollution on forests

Conclusions

61. There are lessons to be learned from the experience of forest decline worldwide and the ongoing monitoring of the effects on forests of airborne pollution in general and of certain types of emissions, such as sulphur. The need and possibilities for extension of monitoring to areas not currently covered should be considered. There is also a need to encourage specific national commitments to further reducing emissions of damaging airborne pollution, especially by countries not currently parties to the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution. The need for further research to strengthen analysis of the available data and promote cooperation between research and monitoring of pollutant depositions needs consideration. There is a need for further dissemination of information to the public and for access to data for potential users, such as forest managers and policy makers.

Preliminary proposals for action

62. The Forum may wish to:

(a) Review lessons learned from the experience of forest decline worldwide, and from the ongoing monitoring of the effects on forests of airborne pollution in general and certain types of emissions, such as sulphur, in particular;

(b) Consider the possibilities for the extension of monitoring to areas not currently covered, and encourage national commitments to further reducing

emissions of damaging airborne pollution, especially by countries not currently parties to the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution;

(c) Emphasize the need for further research to strengthen the analysis of available data, and the need for the coordination and promotion of cooperation in research and monitoring of pollutant depositions;

(d) Consider the need for further dissemination of information to the public and access to data for potential users, such as forest managers and policy makers.

F. Needs and requirements of developing and other countries with low forest cover

63. The outcome of the various ongoing activities under this IPF programme element will be included in UNEP's input to the Secretary-General's report for substantive discussions at the third session of IFF.

G. Financial assistance

64. Preliminary proposals for action include a call for increased ODA for sustainable forest management in developing countries; consideration of emerging revenue sources of forests, increased rent capture and increased private investment; and review of the Global Environment Facility mechanism in relation to the proposal to establish an international forest fund (for further details, see E/CN.17/IFF/1998/7).

H. Technology transfer and capacity-building and information

65. Preliminary proposals for action include a comprehensive assessment of technology needs, increased south-south and trilateral cooperation, and consideration of modern wood energy technologies as a follow-up to the Kyoto Protocol (for further details, see E/CN.17/IFF/1998/4).

I. Assessment of the multiple benefits of all types of forests

Conclusions

66. A number of national, subregional, regional and global-level activities in progress will contribute to the quality of national-level forest resource assessments, as well as to FRA 2000, mainly through improved country capacity-building. It remains clear that in many cases, developing countries need technical and financial assistance to enhance their capacity to conduct forest resources assessments and to use such information for planning sustainable forest management.

67. Progress is being made in the collection of a core set of information on a broad range of forest values, including non-timber values, for all developing and industrialized countries.

68. Several components of FRA 2000 are still unfunded, in particular the remote sensing programme, for which no extrabudgetary resources have been received.

Preliminary proposals for action

69. The Forum may wish to:

(a) Examine capacity-building needs for forest resources assessment in developing countries;

(b) Consider the needs for funding of components of FRA 2000, which are still inadequately funded;

(c) Encourage and support the strengthening of partnerships and information sharing mechanisms related to the assessment of the multiple benefits of all types of forests.

J. Forest research

70. Strengthening and redefinition of priority areas in forest science is needed. The involvement of the eventual clients of forest research - not only in the identification of research topics but also in the conduct of research activities - is critical for improving the application of research outputs. The new broad international concern of societies about the nature and range of forest issues requires a re-examination of forest research institutions, as well as of the "culture" of forest research. What type of new approaches and new alliances are needed now and for the future? Equal emphasis should be placed on how research gets done and on what is done.

Preliminary proposals for action

71. CIFOR will prepare inputs for the third session of IFF based on, inter alia, the ICRIS process.

K. Methodologies for the proper valuation of the multiple benefits of forests

72. Only limited progress has been made on this topic since the IPF process. The proposals for action formulated by IPF are still valid and need to be implemented. The Kyoto Protocol, increasing concerns over water scarcity and conservation and the use of biological diversity, together with growing revenues from ecotourism, have provided further evidence of the importance of the proper valuation of the environmental and other services provided by forests.

L. Criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management

Conclusions

73. International processes for defining criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management have made significant progress. Criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management have proven to be useful tools in country-driven efforts to incorporate a wide array of forest-related values within a common conceptual framework.

74. Operational-level criteria and indicators applicable at the forest management unit level have been developed to complement national criteria and indicators within the framework of eight international initiatives.

75. There is still a very significant number of countries which are not currently participating actively in international criteria and indicators initiatives.

76. Increased efforts are urgently needed at the country and forest management unit levels for the implementation of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management.

77. There is a need to ensure continued dialogue among ongoing and new and emerging initiatives, and to ensure that the criteria and indicators developed and implemented by countries within the framework of these processes are mutually compatible and contribute towards a common understanding of sustainable forest management.

Preliminary proposals for action

78. The Forum may wish to:

(a) Emphasize the need to continue efforts to assist countries that are not participating actively in the international criteria and indicators initiatives in engaging in these activities;

(b) Urge countries to increase efforts for country-level implementation of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. Countries that have advanced with respect to implementation should be encouraged to share their experiences and assist others;

(c) Encourage and support continued dialogue among ongoing and new and emerging initiatives, and ensure that criteria and indicators developed and implemented by countries within the framework of these processes are mutually compatible, and that they contribute towards a common understanding of sustainable forest management. The development of joint brochures and work on common terminology needs to be continued;

(d) Encourage countries concerned to ensure the compatibility of criteria and indicators being implemented at the national level and being developed at the forest management unit level;

(e) Encourage and support continued and increased efforts by international agencies and national institutes to streamline action related to criteria and indicators with national forest assessment and with the FAO Global Forest Resources Programme.

M. Trade and environment in relation to forest products and services

79. Preliminary proposals for action include further reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade in forest products, conducting analyses of potential competition between wood and non-wood substitutes, considering international timber certification, and improving market transparency and intelligence (for further details, see E/CN.17/IFF/1998/3).

Overall conclusion

80. Since the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests concluded its work in February 1997, countries, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and a significant number of international forums have endorsed the outcome of IPF and called for the implementation of the proposals for action. The preliminary results of the many initiatives taken to date by a number of countries and interested parties indicate that although the proposals for action do not constitute a formal and coherent plan of action, the proposals make sense in the national context.

81. There is, however, a clear need for continuing political support for this process, as well as increased international support for developing countries, in particular to those who are not currently able to attract private-sector investment in forest and forest-related activities.

82. There is also a clear need to monitor and evaluate progress towards sustainable forest management, as provided under IFF programme element I.b. Only through a long-term process of monitoring and evaluating progress will it be possible to make the necessary adjustments to ongoing initiatives and launch additional initiatives in support of the conservation, management and sustainable development of all types of forests.

Preliminary proposals for action

83. A key factor in the concerted efforts of supporting the overall implementation of the IPF proposals for action is the facilitation, catalysing and clearing-house roles and functions of the members of the informal high-level Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests. The Forum may wish to call upon donor countries to:

(a) Support the ITFF implementation plan by screening project proposals in line with the IPF proposals for action and in agreement with the division of labour agreed within ITFF;

(b) Involve ITFF members as partners in support programmes for implementation of the IPF proposals for action at the national, regional and global levels;

(c) Encourage inter-agency partnerships as a crucial supportive mechanism to use existing institutions and resources in the most cost-effective and efficient manner.

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Programme element II.b

Matters left pending and other issues arising from the programme elements of the IPF process

Trade and environment

Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

The present report contains a brief discussion of the key trade and environment issues in relation to forest products and services. Only a small proportion of global timber production is destined for international trade. Nevertheless, there is a potentially positive relationship between trade in forest products and services and sustainable forest management, and therefore a need to promote sustainable forest management through mutually supportive trade and environmental policies.

The former Intergovernmental Panel on Forests reached an important set of conclusions and proposals for action on achieving a positive and mutually reinforcing relationship between trade and sustainable forest management, including market access, relative competitiveness of forest products, lesser used species, certification and labelling, full-cost internalization and market transparency. However, the proliferation of "new" trade barriers, such as export restrictions, environmental and trade restrictions on production and exports, and quantitative restrictions on imports of "unsustainably produced" timber products, still pose a potential threat to improved market access.

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Competition between wood and non-wood substitutes is inevitable, and should not unduly constrain a global initiative to improve sustainable forest management.

The proliferation of and lack of coordination among certification and labelling schemes are currently hampering the development of an internationally agreed and voluntary timber certification process. There is a need to achieve international harmonization and mutual recognition of standards for certification and labelling. Country-level certification policies and practices should encourage sustainable management of production forests and timber products, while simultaneously improving international market access of these products.

Forests produce many non-timber products and environmental services, most of which are not currently traded due to lack of proper valuation techniques. Development of appropriate valuation techniques will not only help to create new markets for such products and services but also provide economic incentives for sustainable forest management.

The continuing growth of various forms of illegal trade activities is of concern to the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests. Such activities as illegal harvesting, processing, smuggling, false reporting of quantities and species harvested are not only damaging to forests but also result in loss of revenues.

It is important to ensure that as a result of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) listing, any trade restrictions are both necessary and effective in protecting the endangered tree species.

Finally, the economic impacts of such events as the Asian financial crisis on the region's forest products trade and their implications for global trade need to be monitored in order to determine whether international contingency plans and assistance could support countries and industries in continuing to develop sustainable forest management plans in the face of such short-term economic crises.

The main conclusions and proposals for action of the present report are summarized in section V.

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INTRODUCTION

A. Mandate

1. At its first session, the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) was charged with the following mandate on trade and environment issues:

> "Consider matters left pending on trade and environment. Analyse the mutually supportive roles performed by the international trade and sustainable forest management and, in that context, issues related to non-discriminatory international trade in forest products from all types of forests, including the role that tariff and non-tariff barriers may perform in relation to sustainable forest management, certification issues where relevant and improved market access, taking into account the needs of developing countries, in particular those of the least developed among them. Consider the question of the relationship between obligations under international agreements and national measures, including actions imposed by subnational jurisdictions, recognizing that those matters are also considered in forums whose primary competence is to address trade issues; the relative competitiveness of wood versus substitutes; valuation; and market transparency and the related issue of illegal trade in wood and non-wood forest products." (E/CN.17/IFF/1997/4, para. 7, category II (b))

Some of these issues, such as market access, competitiveness, certification and labelling, full-cost internalization and market transparency, were the initial focus of the substantive trade and environment discussions during the second and third sessions of the former Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF). The new issues recognized by IFF at its first session include analysis of trade and sustainable forest management, non-discriminatory international trade, the relationship between obligations under international agreements and national measures, and illegal trade in wood and non-wood forest products.

B. Outline

2. The trade and environment issues raised by the mandate of IFF are very wide-ranging. The present report aims to help focus the discussion on analysing and potentially enhancing the important role of international trade in forest products in promoting sustainable forest management. It will also address a general concern of the impact of timber production and trade on the "sustainability" of forest resources generally and the potential values of their goods and services.

3. The main rationale for focusing primarily on the relationship between the international trade in timber products and sustainable management of production forests is that this relationship lies at the heart of the key trade and environment issues that IFF seeks to address. However, IPF recognized the problem of data availability for assessing the full range of trade and environment linkages associated with the global forest products trade.

4. As a general context, the report provides a short description of global trade and forest resources trends. Section I summarizes the key conclusions and proposals for action reached by IPF. Section II examines current available evidence covering the nature of trade and environment linkages in the global forest products trade, focusing in particular on issues that were initially examined by IPF and are also of concern to IFF, such as market access, relative competitiveness of wood versus non-wood products, certification and labelling, full-cost internalization and market transparency. Section III concentrates on more recent developments, such as illegal trade, species extinction, recent market trends and their implications for sustainable forest management, and international obligations and agreements. Section IV suggests some conclusions and proposals for action.

C. Global trade and forest resource trends

5. Only a small proportion of global timber production is destined for international trade. Approximately one quarter of wood-based panels and paper products and one fifth of sawnwood and wood pulp are traded internationally. Only 6 to 7 per cent of global industrial roundwood output is currently traded.

6. At the global level, the forest sector contributes about 2 per cent to world gross domestic product and 3 per cent to international merchandise trade. The regional pattern and direction of the global forest products trade has been fairly stable, with the global forest product market still largely dominated by a few countries, most of them the developed countries, in terms of both exports and imports. Nevertheless, two distinct trends have become discernible in recent years, as described below.

7. First, the trade in forest products is highly regionalized within three important trading blocs: the Pacific Rim, North America and Europe (mainly Western Europe). Newly industrialized countries with limited forest resources have also been increasing their imports of logs and semi-finished wood products as raw materials for their export-oriented processing industries.

8. Second, the major global exporters of forest products still tend to be developed countries with temperate forest resources and processing industries. However, a number of developing countries, including Indonesia and Malaysia, have emerged as dominant world exporters of certain forest product exports, such as non-coniferous wood-based panels, logs and sawnwood. Other developing countries, notably Brazil, Chile and the Asian newly industrializing countries, are beginning to have an impact on international trade in wood pulp and paper products. In general, the trade in forest products has shifted towards value-added processed products.

9. The trade in forest products has generally benefited from successive multilateral trade agreements. Tariff barriers to forest products trade have continued to decline in recent years, particularly in the post-Tokyo Round era. For example, even before the Uruguay Round, tariff rates for forest products in developed countries averaged 3.5 per cent compared to 6.3 per cent for all industrial products. The effect of the recently concluded Uruguay Round negotiations will be to reduce tariff rates on forest products further,

including the phasing-out completely of tariffs on pulp and paper products in major developed country markets. It is estimated that the likely gains in trade for major forest products could be in the range of US$ 460-593 million. The implications of the Uruguay Round for the non-tariff barriers increasingly faced by forest products are less clear. However, two special agreements, the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade, provide the basis for tackling certain non-tariff measures that have been used as trade barriers against forest products.

10. The changing pattern of global forest resources is thought to have two important implications for the trade in forest products:

(a) Declining tropical resources and expanding temperate resources are likely to offset each other, leading to [illegible] prices for wood products generally, except for highly valued tropical woods;

(b) The shift to plantations and second-growth forests versus old-growth stands as the source of timber is expected to continue. The long-term pattern will probably shift from the Pacific Northwest of the United States of America and the tropics to plantation forests in North America and newly planted southern hemisphere forests. European forest resources are also projected to expand, at a net rate of about 1 per cent annually.

11. Continued loss of old growth forests, in particular tropical deforestation, is expected to have important environmental implications.

I. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR ACTION OF THE FORMER INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON FORESTS

12. The key conclusions and proposals for action reached by IPF at its fourth session and the issues for which no clear consensus was reached pose a number of important challenges (see E/CN.17/1997/12).

13. IPF formulated an important set of conclusions and proposals for action that need to be implemented if serious progress is to be made on developing trade-related incentives for improved sustainable management of forests, in particular market access, relative competitiveness of forest products, lesser-used species, certification and labelling, full-cost internalization and market transparency. In addition, IPF also tried to address some more recent concerns, such as the increasing illegal trade in forest products and the need to reconcile national measures with obligations under international agreements.

14. However, the lack of consensus in IPF on certain proposals on market access suggests that these proposals are generally concerned with establishing a commitment by all countries to either: (a) accept an internationally binding agreement on all forests that covers trade or (b) ensure that national forest trade policies conform with global trading rules and international agreements.

II. CURRENT STATUS OF TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT IN FOREST PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

A. Market access and "new" barriers to forest products trade

15. Trade in forest products is highly susceptible to changes in market access and trade barriers. Important progress made in further reducing tariffs on the global forest products trade as a result of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations could be negated by new types of barriers to the trade, particularly non-tariff barriers, which could still impede market access for many products as well as lead to new forms of "protectionism". In recent years, there has been a proliferation of additional policies and regulations that have the potential of becoming "new" barriers to the forest products trade, including:

(a) Export restrictions by developing countries to encourage the domestic processing of tropical timber for export;

(b) Environmental and trade restrictions on production and exports in developed countries that affect international trade patterns;

(c) Quantitative restrictions on imports of "unsustainably produced" timber products, and the use of eco-labelling and "green" certification as import barriers.

16. Although only the last two measures could be strictly defined as "new", all of these trade measures have been increasingly employed in recent years and have the potential to affect forest product trade flows significantly.

17. Developing countries continue to use export restrictions on wood in rough and semi-processed products to support domestic processing industries. Export taxes and bans aimed to encourage forest-based industrialization and sustainable timber management in tropical forest countries have proved only moderately successful in achieving the desired results in South-East Asia, generally with high economic costs.

18. Developed countries are increasingly employing a variety of environmental regulations in their forest industries - both alone and in conjunction with export restrictions - that may have significant trade implications. For example, the combination of trade and environmental restrictions on logging in the Pacific Northwest of the United States produced significant domestic and global trade impacts, including increases in global sawlog prices and regional shifts in production.

19. In many developed countries, domestic policies to promote waste paper recovery and recycling have had important trade implications, particularly where they involve mandatory restrictions on the levels of virgin fibre and pulp use. For example, United States recycled content laws may provide an unequal cost advantage to domestic producers because of the greater availability of used newsprint in the United States than in Canada. Similar problems apply to packaging and reuse requirements, such as the recent European Union Packaging

Directive and Japan's regulations for the recycling of paper, logging residues and dismantled houses.

20. Although there are legitimate uses of all the trade policy measures discussed above, the rate at which they are being implemented and the frequency with which they have led to trade distortion and discrimination suggests that their use must be examined carefully. What clearly needs to be avoided is indiscriminate and widespread application of "new" barriers to the forest products trade that could easily override the gains in market access resulting from the recently concluded Uruguay Round.

21. National Governments face the challenge of reconciling their individual trading policies with established international trading rules and agreements, and it will have to be determined whether this requires the need for a new international agreement covering all forests.

B. Relative competitiveness of wood versus substitutes

22. Forest products may be substituted by non-wood products in end uses and final markets. Although there is increasing anecdotal evidence of this occurring in many consumer markets, particularly in construction and furniture industries, estimating the magnitude or scale of this effect has proven more difficult. However, for specific products this substitution effect may be significant. For example, plywood is believed to face severe competition from solid synthetic panels, with price strongly influencing the choice of product in the construction industry. In addition, substitution may be more of a problem for wood-based composites, such as particle board, fibreboard and reconstituted panels and wood pulp.

23. As to the competitiveness of wood products from different regions, the available evidence indicates that the elasticities of substitution between temperate and tropical wood products are very low. This suggests that there are two distinct markets, and that tropical producers of these products would have difficulty in penetrating the larger temperate market. Empirical studies suggest that substitution between tropical and temperate timber products in importing markets has not been very significant. However, in response to bans on log exports by tropical producers, some importers are increasingly diversifying the source of their supply. Substitution between tropical timber products originating from different countries or regions does appear to be very high, particularly for plywood. This would suggest that importers can substitute between sources of origin with relative ease but also that exporters can easily capture market share through price competition.

24. Thus, the available empirical evidence indicates that producers as a group may enjoy significant market power. If all producer countries instigate sustainable forest management and this leads to higher prices for timber products across the board, then there may not necessarily be any significant loss of market share by any country. However, if only a few producers instigate sustainable management and this leads to higher prices for their forest products, then substitution away from these products is more likely to occur.

C. Certification and labelling

25. As noted by IPF, the number of eco-labelling and certification initiatives applied to the forest products trade has increased rapidly in recent years. There is considerable concern among producer countries and forest-based industries that certification and labelling will be used as non-tariff barriers limiting access to key import markets. Provided that such regulations and schemes are non-discriminatory, transparent and justified, are agreed mutually between trading partners or through multilateral negotiations, comply with World Trade Organization (WTO) rules and conform with internationally recognized guidelines, then their potential use as trade barriers will be drastically reduced. However, the possible role of voluntary and non-discriminatory timber certification in promoting sustainable forest management on a significant scale globally is, at best, still not clear.

26. The term "certification" has been used indiscriminately to cover a wide range of processes. Proponents of certification argue that it has the potential to assist in promoting sustainable forest management while simultaneously reassuring consumers. A properly designed, voluntary and independently accredited certification scheme at the global level can be a means by which the various stakeholders can hold producers accountable; it can provide a market-based incentive to the individual producer to improve management; it can meet consumer demands for wood from well-managed forests without creating trade discriminations; and it can be a mechanism for monitoring multiple factors involved in forest use. However, others suggest that the evidence for considerable additional demand for certified wood products is unproven, and only in certain small "niche" markets may customers be willing to pay more for certified timber. It is argued by some that the necessary but stringent conditions required for an accredited global certification scheme are bound to have only a limited impact on a small proportion of global timber production, and an equally limited impact on the sustainable management of a limited area of forests.

27. Recent estimates of the total global certified forest area is about 5.1 million hectares, which produces about 3.5 million cubic metres (m^3) annually. In fact, certified production accounts for only 0.23 per cent of the world's industrial roundwood production. Even under more optimistic projections, only 15 per cent of traded wood products are expected to be affected by certification by 1999.

28. One of the additional benefits of certification might be that it would allow timber exporters to avoid losses of market share and revenues in environmentally sensitive markets. The total gain from certification of tropical timber products is estimated to be US$ 428 million, or 4 per cent of current timber product exports from developing countries. However, critics argue that the growing importance of domestic markets in tropical countries and the dominance of markets where consumers are less interested in certified timber limit the potential market effects of this instrument for tropical timber products.

29. There is also the issue of whether timber certification inevitably leads to higher prices for timber products in final consumer markets. It is important to

explore whether any price premium would cover the costs of certification. For example, for tropical products the costs of assessing or auditing have been estimated at about US$ 0.3 and US$ 1 per hectare per year in developing countries; for temperate products in developed countries, cost estimates for certifying forests are roughly similar - US$ 0.3 to 0.6 per hectare.

30. There is now an emerging opinion that an adequate international framework is needed both to ensure harmonization and mutual recognition of certification systems and to ensure an effective international accreditation process of certification bodies. The important criteria for any internationally accredited certification body are that it be independent, impartial and able to demonstrate that its organization and personnel are free from any commercial, financial or other pressure. Equally, to achieve harmonization and mutual recognition, a voluntary international certification system must (a) be comprehensive and cover all types of forests and wood products; (b) be based on objective and measurable criteria; (c) produce reliable assessment results, and thus be fully independent from any vested interests; (d) be transparent and involve a balanced participation of the interested parties and stakeholders, thereby ensuring their commitment, (e) represent all involved parties; and (f) be goal-oriented and cost-effective.

31. The establishment of an international framework covering all existing and proposed timber certification schemes, as well as a common or comparable core set of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management on which such schemes can rely, is clearly a long-term process. Also, an altogether different type of certification scheme, such as a country-level certification scheme, has recently been proposed.

32. A new kind of certification for forests is under discussion in the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) in connection with the already agreed ISO 14001 standard for environmental management system (EMS), which applies to all sectors and not only to the forest sector. EMS certification is verifying that the right system is in place. Canada is moving ahead with implementing a certification scheme for certifying forests under EMS.

D. Valuation

33. It is a general perception that forests are undervalued in the marketplace for the products and services that they provide to society. This in turn distorts land-use and forest-management decisions by both public and private sectors. Properly done valuation can provide useful information to all those concerned with forest management, trade and general environment. Although timber and other products are relatively easily valued at the market, they may not reflect the full costs and benefits of those products. Many non-timber products and services of forests, such as carbon sequestration, biodiversity, watershed services and ecotourism, are relatively new concepts for valuation and trade. However, a few initiatives have been taken to create markets for these services, such as carbon offset trading, bioprospecting and ecotourism. But, many studies and institutional arrangements are needed in this direction.

34. For further discussion on valuation, please refer to the note of the Secretariat on programme element II.d (E/CN.17/1998/8).

E. Market transparency

35. Improved market transparency is a key element in progress on the three key areas considered by IPF: reducing trade barriers to market access; international harmonization and mutual recognition of standards on timber certification; and policy reform and full cost internalization to promote sustainable forest management. Without greater market transparency, progress in all these areas is likely to be hampered.

36. This suggests that progress in developing trade-related incentives for sustainable forest management globally could benefit from improvements in market transparency in the following ways:

(a) Countries importing forest products should routinely review and make publicly available information on domestic environmental, health, building, labour and other standards and regulations that are likely to affect the import of forest products and patterns of international trade generally. Where such regulations by the importing country are considered a legitimate means to restrict access to its domestic market on environmental or health grounds, then this information not only should be made publicly available but also should be periodically assessed by an appropriate international authority, such as WTO;

(b) Countries that use export restrictions to promote value-added processing should also routinely review and make available detailed information on such policies. The latter should also be periodically reviewed and assessed by an appropriate international body, such as WTO;

(c) International harmonization and mutual recognition of standards on timber certification will require detailed information on both forest management practices globally and the process chain of custody from the forest stand in producer countries to final product in consumer countries for the wide variety of timber products traded internationally. Some of this information can be gained from end-use studies directed at the final consumer and from assessments of forest-level harvesting practices. However, more information needs to be made available from intermediate processors, exporters, importers and wood-based manufacturers to help to develop improved international standards on timber certification;

(d) More market information from producing country, consumer country and industry sources will be required to assess various aspects of management, production and trade of forest products. These will include assessments of the costs of implementing sustainable forest management in producer countries, as well as of the long-term impacts on patterns of forest-based industries in these countries, use of the forest resource base, the returns to different harvesting systems and the competitiveness of forest products in consumer markets. Again, cooperation on providing this information might be more forthcoming if such assessments were officially sanctioned through an internationally agreed process, such as country certification;

(e) Improved market intelligence for forest products is also required generally since such intelligence is lacking for most wood-based products. Both consumers and producers would benefit from better market intelligence that would lead to more competitive and efficient markets.

37. However, IPF also identified the trade in illegally harvested timber supplies as a new and growing threat to the use of trade-related incentives for sustainable forest management.

III. ASSESSMENT OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

38. There have been some recent developments that may pose both new opportunities and challenges, including illegal trade, species extinction, international obligations and agreements, and recent market trends and their implications for sustainable forest management.

A. Illegal trade

39. Illegal trade in forest products include many activities that are prohibited by national laws and/or international agreements, such as trade in illegally harvested logs, logging of protected/restricted species, logging outside concessions, logging in protected areas, cutting under/oversized trees, extracting more than the allowable cut, and logging without authorization or in breech of contractual obligations. Smuggling of logs and processed goods, falsifying inventory and valuation of products, and illegal processing can also be included as illegal trade in forest products.

40. Although difficult to verify conclusively, there is some evidence that the scale of illegal trade in logs is continuing unabated and possibly even increasing. For example, the annual review by the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) of member countries' trade has indicated a perpetual problem of underreporting of log exports. Publicizing such discrepancies can have an impact: for example, as a result of the evidence of underreporting in ITTO's annual review, Papua New Guinea has undertaken to tighten controls over its log exports.

41. Illegal logging and trade is also a serious setback for promoting sustainable forest management practices. By their very nature, such activities involve destructive and short-term practices that are damaging to forests. In addition, the loss in export duties, timber royalties and income taxes to developing country Governments means that less revenues are available to promote sustainable forest management and improve forest departments and institutions.

B. Endangered species and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

42. Because of the concern over endangered species, a number of developed countries, strongly supported by conservation groups, have attempted to have various commercially important tropical tree species placed in one of three

appendix listings of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Recent attempts to have more commercially important tropical species listed have been controversial. Many trade and forestry interests, including exporting countries affected by the listings, have questioned whether some of the species proposed for listing are really endangered or threatened, and whether the procedures used to determine this are sound, given the generally poor information available on the inventory of species in tropical forests and on the actual species composition of traded timber products. A further problem with a CITES listing, as noted in subsection III.A above, is that it can create inducements to increase illegal trade in a species. A CITES listing places a large burden on the CITES authorities in countries involved in the trade of the listed species to implement the required controls. Without significant support by the relevant Governments and trade interests, CITES controls on trade may be less effective.

43. There is a genuine need to control trade in endangered species. However, it is important to ensure that any trade restrictions imposed are (a) necessary for guaranteeing the protection of an endangered species, and (b) capable of improving the survival of a species that would otherwise be endangered by commercial trade. It is not obvious that many timber species fall into both of these categories.

C. International obligations and agreements

44. The "Year 2000 objective" is an important objective of ITTO for enhancing the capacity of member countries to implement strategy for ensuring that all their tropical timber exports come from sustainably managed forests by the year 2000. This is one of the objectives of the new International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA) of 1994. During the process of negotiating the new Agreement, the issue of whether ITTA should be broadened to cover all the world's forests was debated. Although the new ITTA has not been strictly altered beyond its original mandate to cover just tropical forests, the terms of the new agreement do allow some scope for such broadening of the ITTA mandate beyond tropical forests. Already, many consumer member countries - who are also major exporters of temperate forest products - have indicated that they are willing to follow commitments similar to ITTA to ensure sustainable management of their forests for the timber trade. Some other joint actions have been pursued by consumer countries in the Helsinki and Montreal processes, as well as under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and other international organizations.

45. The issue of whether ITTO or any other international forum on forests should eventually negotiate a multilateral agreement to cover all trade in forest products, in particular to commit all producer and consumer countries to ensuring that the global forest products trade is derived from sustainably managed sources, is still an important proposal that IFF must address. The important issue of what international and national policies are required to facilitate the long-term management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests that are sources for the global forest products trade and whether such policies need to be endorsed through multilateral agreement and commitments is an important area for consideration by IFF.

D. Country certification

46. The role of certification in promoting sustainable forest management has been discussed in section II.C above. Given the pressing need to promote sustainable forest management globally, it is imperative to develop urgently other instruments complementary to timber certification that are more directl aimed at wholesome and timely improvements in forestry management policies an regulations in producer countries. One such approach is the concept of "coun certification". Originally proposed in a report to ITTO, country certificati involves certifying through explicit bilateral or multilateral recognition al timber products from a country that can prove it is complying with an internationally agreed objective, such as a sustainable forest managemen target. Such a scheme could be enacted for all timber producer countries through an international agreement on global forests. It might also require additional assistance for developing countries with inadequate financial resources to achieve, implement and monitor the key policy objectives. To be effective, country certification would require two broad sets of policy commitments from timber-producing and timber-consuming countries, respectivel

47. The first set of policies would require producer countries to undertake substantial reviews of their forest-sector policies and to correct those pol distortions that work against sustainable timber production objectives, beca such distortions are believed to be at the heart of inefficient and unsustainable forest-sector development and timber-related deforestation (se section II above). Based on progress in those areas, such producer countrie could be certified for complying with internationally agreed objectives. Th second set of policies would require a commitment by consumer countries to removing any remaining tariff and non-tariff barriers to timber imports into domestic markets for producer countries that demonstrate a commitment to for sector policy reform, actively promoting the use of tropical timber imports exporting countries that are implementing "sustainable management" policies removing any "new barriers".

48. As with certification of timber produced from sustainably managed fores any country certification scheme needs to be voluntary, transparent and internationally agreed.

E. Recent market developments

49. Encouraging trade-related incentives for sustainable forest management long-term process. Attainment of such a long-term goal may be affected by m disruptions to key markets and price trends. There is a need to monitor the impact of "shock events", such as the Asian market crisis, on the region's forest products trade, as well as their implications for global trade. Alth it is too early to determine the long-term impacts of this crisis, in partic its implications for the objective of improving trade-related incentives fo sustainable forest management, the short-term indications are not good. The vulnerability of Asian and other developing country forest industries to suc crises could make it extremely difficult for such industries to plan and implement long-term strategies for ensuring that their trade is derived fro sustainably managed forest sources. There is a need to consider ways in wh

the international community could develop contingency plans and assistance to support countries and industries in retaining a long-term perspective on sustainable forest management in the face of severe short-term economic crises, such as the recent Asian difficulties.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

50. IFF can build on the proposals for action advanced by IPF and consider further proposals for action in line with recent developments concerning trade and environment issues of importance to the world's forests. The main objective of trade and environment policies is to encourage all countries to achieve trade in forest products from sustainably managed forests and to use this trade as an incentive for making the transition to sustainable forest management.

51. Market transparency is essential for providing information to facilitate independent market and economic analyses of market competitiveness and long-term substitution of forest products, and of the costs and benefits of implementing sustainable forest management in producer countries.

52. Thus, in the following key areas for policy action that could improve the role of trade-related incentives in encouraging sustainable forest management globally, IFF may wish to:

(a) Support continued efforts by WTO to encourage all its member countries to reduce further tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade in forest products;

(b) Support efforts by WTO, FAO, ITTO, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the European Union (EU) and other international bodies to conduct more independent market and economic analyses of potential competition between different wood products and between products from different regions of origin, and between wood and non-wood substitutes, analysing in particular the likely substitution effects of any rises in forest product price that might accompany a global initiative to improve sustainable forest management;

(c) Encourage current international efforts to promote the parallel and cooperative development of international timber certification initiatives, as well as related national and regional schemes, with the overall objective of achieving international harmonization and mutual recognition of standards for timber certification;

(d) Support the efforts of WTO to ensure that existing and new certification and eco-labelling schemes for wood products in importing and consumer markets are not used in a discriminatory way as a form of disguised protectionism;

(e) Support efforts by WTO, FAO, the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), ITTO, UNCTAD, EU and other international institutions to develop more independent market and economic analyses of the potential additional stand-level and industry-wide costs resulting from the transition to sustainable forestry management and policy reforms. Such analyses should also examine the potential long-term benefits of improved efficiencies and sustainability at all levels of the forestry industry, as well as the

development and coordination of international efforts for improved market intelligence;

(f) Encourage greater market transparency to ensure the objectives of improved market access for timber products, international harmonization and mutual recognition of standards for timber certification, international commitments to a country certification process, and assessing the international financial and technical assistance needed by developing countries;

(g) Support ongoing efforts by WTO, FAO, ITTO, EU, UNCTAD and other international bodies to improve market transparency and intelligence;

(h) Reaffirm the IPF proposal for action that requested countries to provide an assessment and share relevant information on the nature and extent of illegal trade in forest products, and to consider measures to counter such illegal trade, support ongoing efforts by WTO, FAO, ITTO, EU, UNCTAD, the World Bank and other bodies to monitor and investigate the illegal trade, and encourage them to coordinate their efforts;

(i) Urge the CITES Timber Working Group to work with member countries to ensure that any trade restrictions imposed through CITES are necessary for guaranteeing the protection of a species, can be effectively and efficiently implemented, and are capable of improving the survival chances of a species;

(j) Consider appropriate mechanisms and arrangements to cover all forests that would commit all producer countries to ensuring that the global forest products trade is derived from sustainably managed sources. In particular, the issue of what international and national policies are required to facilitate sustainable forest management globally and whether such policies need to be endorsed through multilateral agreement and commitments is an important area for consideration;

(k) Given the pressing need to promote sustainable forest management globally, consider setting up a country certification process involving an international commitment by producer countries to adopt policies and practices towards encouraging sustainable management of production forests and timber products. Meanwhile, developed consumer countries should adopt policies and practices for improving international market access to those products;

(l) Recognize the need to monitor closely such events as the economic impact of the Asian market crisis on the region's forest products trade and its implications for global trade, and promote consideration of ways in which international contingency plans could assist and support countries and industries to retain a long-term perspective on sustainable forest management in the face of severe short-term economic crises, such as the recent Asian difficulties.

53. The above tasks clearly build upon existing efforts and work being conducted by several international bodies, such as WTO, FAO, CIFOR, ITTO, the International Trade Centre, UNCTAD, EU, the World Bank and others. There is considerable scope for these different bodies to collaborate and coordinate activities on these tasks, as well as to jointly identify additional areas for further joint work.

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Matters left pending and other issues arising from the programme elements of the IPF process

Transfer of environmentally sound technologies to support sustainable forest management

Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

Following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the international dialogue has considerably enhanced the understanding of sustainable forest management and has accelerated action towards such management by various stakeholders. However, forestry practices in most countries are characterized by being insufficiently aggressive in utilizing available environmentally sound technologies for more efficient production harvesting and processing of wood and non-wood products and for forest conservation. Furthermore, social as well as long-term sustainability aspects have received inadequate consideration to date.

Although better implementation of sound technologies has great potential for enhancing the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests, technology is often not the critical limiting factor, and not every constraint to sustainable forest management can be alleviated by the transfer of technology. Indeed, policy environments favourable to sustainable forest management and the implementation of technologies are as important as the technologies themselves.

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In contrast to the intense international policy dialogue, implementation of sustainable forest management has been slow in many countries. This is partly due to insufficient awareness and appreciation of the potential benefits that can be derived from the use of environmentally sound and socially acceptable technologies in the management, conservation and sustainable development of forests to meet present and future needs. There have also been insufficient efforts for the comprehensive assessment of technology generation and needs. Furthermore, many developing countries have weak capacities for assessment of the environmental soundness of available and emerging technologies.

It is suggested that as part of a broader challenge at the national and international levels, the ongoing international forest policy dialogue address the promotion, development and implementation of national forests programmes, including the comprehensive assessment of technology needs, exchange of information and technology transfer. Beyond national forests programmes, there will be a need for sustained international support for capacity-building in technology assessment, information access and the dissemination of sound technologies and equipment for use in forestry. The present report is based on material prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, as lead agency for this topic within th· informal high-level Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests.

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I. MANDATE AND SCOPE

A. Mandate

1. At its first session, in October 1997, the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) emphasized the need to build on the positive results achieved by the former Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF), and to consider matters left pending and matters arising from the programme elements discussed during the IPF process. The Forum decided that the topic of technology transfer would be discussed under programme element II.c of its programme of work, with the following mandate:

> "Examine ways of promoting, facilitating and financing access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies and corresponding know-how to developing countries on favourable terms, including concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed, taking into account chapter 34 of Agenda 21 and paragraph 11 of the Forest Principles, and examine appropriate mechanisms to effect such access and transfer; consider technologies and technical knowledge, including extension services for local sustainable management, as well as enhanced technology development, transfer and application to improve the utilization of wood and non-wood forest products and services, with special attention to wood as an energy source and to the role of women." (E/CN.17/IFF/1997/4, para. 7, category II (c))

2. The Forum also decided that this issue would receive substantive discussion at its second session. The present report has been prepared with the intention of providing the basis for that discussion.

B. Scope

3. The present report recalls some of the conclusions and proposals for action contained in the final report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests on its fourth session (E/CN.17/IPF/1997/12) that are relevant to transfer of environmentally sound technologies. It also provides a brief overview of the particular problems encountered in transferring technologies that are specific to forests and forest products processing. It describes some of the activities undertaken by some of the major actors in transferring forest-related technologies. The report also contains a brief description of the types of technologies that need to be transferred and the particular mechanisms needed to facilitate this. The report concludes with a set of conclusions and preliminary proposals for action that the Forum may wish to consider.

II. INTRODUCTION

4. Improved access to and better application of available and emerging technologies would greatly contribute to sustainable management of forests. It is also important, however, to recognize that in many countries, technology is often not the critical limiting factor in enhancing management, conservation and sustainable development. Rather, the status of forestry practice in many

countries is such that major advances can be made in sustainable forest management through improvements in current management practices.

5. Furthermore, there may not necessarily be a technological solution for every problem; not every constraint to sustainable forest management can be alleviated by the transfer of technology. Policy environments favourable to sustainable forest management and the implementation of technologies are as important as the technologies themselves.

6. It is important to stress that all parties need to be cautious about the possible mix of purposes between technology transfer and "technology dumping". Transfer of technology should be driven by needs and not by supply. In addition, the proper use of technologies is critical to their impact on sustainable forest management. Thus, capacity-building of human resources and institutions are critical to the successful transfer of technology.

7. For the world's forests to continue to provide multiple services, their management, conservation and sustainable development must continue to benefit from and take advantage of the most recent relevant technological advances and technical know-how. Technological advances hold great potential for more efficient and sustainable management of forests in many areas. This is common to all countries, developing and developed. The aspects of forestry which stand to benefit the most from technological innovations include (a) forest resource assessment (remote sensing, computer-based geographical information system (GIS) techniques etc.); (b) intensive wood production (biotechnology and breeding); (c) forest harvesting and transport; (d) wood processing and use (saw mill technologies, pulp and paper manufacturing, energy production); and (e) processing and other addition of value to non-wood forest products (fruits, oils, gums, pharmaceutical products etc.).

8. It is important to pursue the IPF proposal that finance and technology be considered interrelated components of investment and international assistance since they are essential for socio-economic development and growth. Traditionally, technology transfer has been a component of development assistance packages for developing countries. In the future, however, the private sector is likely to play a greater role, especially in forest-rich countries, and technology transfer will probably feature more prominently in agreements on trade and environment in relation to forest products and services. Countries with low forest cover are likely to benefit less from private-sector involvement.

III. OVERVIEW OF THE CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR ACTION OF THE FORMER INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON FORESTS

9. The former IPF made several proposals for action relevant to technology transfer. It urged countries to primarily assess and explicitly identify their national technological requirements consistent with their national forest programmes. It also promoted South-South, North-South and trilateral cooperation in forest-related technology transfer, and highlighted the importance of access to information and capacity-building in the context of successfully transferring environmentally sound technologies.

10. Following its final session, the Commission on Sustainable Development endorsed the final report of the former IPF and stressed the urgent need for enhanced international cooperation to implement IPF proposals for actions towards the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests, including provision for financial resources, capacity-building, research and the transfer of technology.

IV. CURRENT STATUS OF THE TRANSFER OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND TECHNOLOGIES

11. Technology for sustainable forest management is understood here in a broad sense, encompassing techniques as well as methods, technical knowledge and information. Therefore, transfer of technology is a component of a wide range of programmes and projects at different levels, ranging from research and scientific information to technical cooperation and extension.

12. Different organizations play different roles in the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to support sustainable forest management. For example, universities and other research and training organizations provide help with the state of knowledge and practice. Public and private organizations have formal and informal linkages for the transfer of such technologies the world over. Multilateral, bilateral and local resource providers include technology transfer and capacity-building components in their support packages. The United Nations and its relevant specialized agencies play a significant role as facilitators of global consensus-building, and assist countries in technology transfer and capacity-building. Many intergovernmental agencies and political and/or economic blocks assist in the transfer and adoption of environmentally sound technologies. In some countries, private industry is active in the development and transfer of technologies. Environmental NGOs are becoming increasingly important advocates for the transfer and adoption of environmentally sound technologies in many parts of the world.

13. There are some opportunities to catalyse and support technology transfer as parts of official bilateral and multilateral assistance programmes for developing countries. The transfer of forest technologies, however, may be constrained by broader policy issues, such as those related to forest harvesting. Some donor agencies have limitations in financing projects dealing with this aspect of forestry unless seen as one of the component of sustainable forest management. It is important that this issue be discussed and resolved mutually by parties engaged in international cooperation for the sustainable management of forests.

V. ASSESSMENT OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

14. The report of the Secretary-General on overall progress achieved since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (E/CN.17/1997/2 and Add.1-31) amply summarized the status of recent developments. Although many of the goals of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) were to be achieved through reliance on environmentally sound technologies, there has been little follow-up action on increased transfer of

available technologies for the sustainable management of forests. It is suggested that IFF address the various facets of this shortfall, as set out below.

A. Forest development policy imperatives

15. It is important that the promotion of investments in and transfer of environmentally sound technologies, as well as extension activities in general, be addressed in the new generation of forest policies and as part of national forest programmes. Important components of national forest programmes involve the assessment of technology requirements and specific action plans for their access, transfer and development, as well as extension programmes for local capacity-building. It is expected that the new generation of national forest programmes will feature stronger partnerships between the public sector, private sector, and communities in the sustainable management of forests. Through such partnerships, the private sector, if supported by adequate policy environments, will potentially play a bigger role in sustainable forest management and conservation, as well as in forest technology development and transfer, particularly in forest-rich countries.

B. Range of possible technologies

16. It is instructive to consider developments around the three technology groups identified below:

1. Available technologies

17. First, many available technologies in both developed and developing countries could be better utilized for the sustainable management of forests. Examples of available technologies and methods include improved genetic quality of planting material, tree plantation development, and timber harvesting and processing technologies. The success of their transfer and use depend on (a) enabling policy environment, and (b) human capacity development, particularly for developing countries.

18. For these available technologies to be utilized, actions are needed primarily at the national level, with technology transfer playing a relatively small role. However, recent trends in many developing countries indicate that, without targeted and specific assistance, little additional investment in the use of environmentally sound technologies in forest management can be expected from either the public or private sector.

2. Technologies needing increased transfer

19. There are many technologies for supporting the sustainable management of forests that are already in use (including in some developing countries) but that have not yet been tested and transferred to other developing countries, such as satellite and GIS-based forest assessment techniques, biotechnology, and

specialized aspects of tree product processing (value addition); these are mostly applied in developed countries only. For some of these recently developed technologies, there is a need for adaptive research on their effective adaptation and application in developing countries. For developing countries to take full advantage of these recently developed technologies for the sustainable management of their forests, additional investments are needed in (a) training, (b) minimal facilities to support use, and (c) operating costs.

20. Two important limitations on the transfer and effective use of this second group of technologies in developing countries need to be specifically addressed: (a) the patent and other intellectual property right issues of technologies (particularly for high-value pharmaceutical and food tree products), and (b) the high costs and difficulties of access to some of these technologies (particularly for satellite-based technologies).

3. Emerging technologies

21. There are new and emerging technologies of significant potential value for our understanding, such as technologies concerning the functioning of forest ecosystems, which could contribute to environmentally sound management. Some of these emerging technologies are still at the research and development stage, while others are at an application and testing stage in a few countries; examples of these emerging technologies and methods are genetic engineering and technologies used in assessing functions of forests, such as carbon sequestration. Research indicates that some of these technologies have the potential to revolutionize the way we assess, conserve and enhance the functions and services of forests. Developing countries need to be encouraged and supported to become full partners in ongoing research and development. Partnership in technology research and development will circumvent some of the technology access and transfer problems encountered by developing countries in the past by, for example, greatly reducing the time lag between technology development and its future impact on the sustainable management of forests in developing countries.

C. Technology assessment methodology and capacity-building

22. In contrast to the development of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management, little progress has been made on the development of methods for assessing the environmental soundness of forest production and forest product processing technologies. This is an important area that extends into such aspects as sharing the costs of environmental damage, certain aspects of international trade in forest products and technology transfer. The practical starting point is the development of appropriate technology assessment methods by employing certain internationally agreed, objective criteria and indicators. There are examples from other sectors, such as methods applied in assessing agricultural technologies. In any case, the minimum requirement for technology assessment remains the ex ante appraisal of societal and environmental effects of technology application.

23. Developing countries need to address the urgent need for capacity-building in technology assessment and access, within their international forestry cooperation and support programmes, first with a priority focus on better utilization of technologies already available in the country. Second, capacity-building efforts need to focus on methods for assessing technologies earmarked for transfer. Third, capacity-building needs to focus on exposure to and assessment of new and emerging technologies that could enhance the sustainable management of forests in the future. There is a need for technical guidance from specialized bodies with a comparative advantage in capacity-building for sustainable forest management technologies, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Tropical Timber Organization and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

24. Capacity-building efforts could also be better sustained if developing countries, among themselves, developed mechanisms of collaboration and networking to reduce costs and move towards collective self-reliance in their capacities to effectively assess technologies. This is an area where international and regional organizations could promote and support regional training and information networking.

D. Linkages between research, technology generation, information technology and trade

25. In many countries, forestry research and the generation and transfer of technology are integrated and/or compounded. These linkages are particularly evident where research is supported by the private sector. It should be noted that forestry as practised in many countries today is not adequately utilizing research findings and technological innovations. The issues involving the changing dimensions of forestry science and practice (see para. 21 above) apply equally well to forestry research. These close linkages need to be recognized and treated, as far as possible, as two sides of the same coin. Lack of current information on available technologies and on those under research and development is another important limitation to technology assessment and transfer. Few developing countries have focal points for technology information dissemination and assessment. Information on relevant technological innovations and adaptations in other countries is often not sufficiently targeted for possible assessment. The combination of lack of information and lack of mechanisms/centres for their assessment greatly limits the transfer and adoption of environmentally sound technologies in forest management in developing countries. Pertinent developments in information technology are important prerequisites for technology transfer.

26. In the current more liberalized global trade environment established since the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, it is to be expected that countries, in particular developing countries, will seek greater opportunities to benefit from value addition on the products and services from their forests. This is accomplished through increased local processing and through investment in environmentally sound extraction and processing technologies.

E. Current trends in North-South technology transfer

27. In most cases, industrialized countries place no restrictions on transfer of technologies that are available in the market. Developing countries, however, have yet to develop appropriate mechanisms for their routine access and assessment. Few countries have developed specific investment incentives to promote technology transfer, both on the exporting and receiving ends. A more significant trend in accelerating technology transfer is the growing pressure from powerful environmental non-governmental organizations on private companies in industrialized countries to use cleaner technologies in their operations based in developing countries. The current inertia in the North-South transfer of environmentally sound technologies is such that developing countries need to consider alternative strategies to accelerate the process. A possible strategy would be for developing countries to engage in collective bargaining for technology transfer to their regions.

F. Current trends in South-South technology transfer

28. Environmentally sound technologies generated in the South are likely to be (a) more accessible, (b) less costly and (c) more appropriate for countries in the South. Clearly, this constitutes a strong case for strengthening South-South cooperation in assessment needs for improved technologies and their transfer among countries and regions. Several initiatives have been started to promote and support technical cooperation among developing countries, which could provide useful platforms for accelerating the transfer of forest technologies. Regional and interregional networks are potentially useful mechanisms for the South-South and trilateral transfer of technologies for sustainable forest management.

29. The role of traditional forest-related knowledge warrants specific consideration in the discussion of transfer and benefit-sharing from derived products. The role of indigenous people and other forest-dependent people living traditional lifestyles should play a key role in this area. The forests are the greatest reservoirs of biodiversity, with species of great value as food, pharmacopoeias and traditional medicine. Examples from African forests include *Ancistrocladus korupensis*, of which some elements have shown promising activities against the human immunodeficiency viruses HIV-1 and HIV-2, and *Prunus africana*, of which elements have been proven to treat prostate cancer. In many cases, in developing countries, where traditional forest-related knowledge has the potential to lead to important breakthroughs, intellectual property right protection does not exist and/or is not enforced. Under such circumstances, there are many unresolved issues on transparency, fair recognition and sharing of benefits upon transfer of knowledge and technology.

G. Technology transfer and diffusion to extension workers, private-sector agents and farmers

30. To date, international deliberations on forests have given relatively little emphasis to the need for more effective technology dialogue with end beneficiaries, such as extension workers, private-sector agents and farmers in

both developed and developing countries. A few success stories of the transfer of computer-aided woodlot management and woodworking industry technologies to extension workers and private-sector agents have recently been reported in, for example, the United States of America, Finland and Sweden. The transfer and diffusion of technologies to end-users are of particular importance for wood energy technologies, and have the potential to make a significant contribution to sustainable management of forests the world over. Only a few developing countries have taken specific action towards sustained technology transfer and diffusion to the various end-users. Technology transfer and diffusion to end-users are development challenges for most countries, developed and developing, and deserve greater support. Transfer technologies related to worker's safety and health would be of particular importance since many counties have poor legal and technical mechanisms related to forest workers' safety.

H. Gender implications of forest-related technology transfer

31. Although there are important gender-related issues concerning forest tenure and ownership that need to be resolved, it is fully recognized that the transfer and diffusion of technologies for the use of wood as an energy source have made a significant impact on the quality of life and economic advancement of women in some developing countries. The Nairobi Programme of Action, as adopted by the United Nations Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy in 1981, addressed important development challenges, but unfortunately for many developing countries, the needed relief from the burden placed on women, in particular, as fuelwood collectors has not been accomplished.

32. The Fourth World Conference on Women, held at Beijing in 1995, called for an assessment of the implications of any planned action for women and men; this is a process generally known as gender mainstreaming, which has provided an impetus for action to ensure that women not only have access to and training in technology but also participate in the process from development to application, as well as monitoring and evaluation. The Conference also calls for diversification of and increase in vocational and technical training of women and girls in such fields as environmental and technical sciences. The Beijing Platform for Action calls for an increased effort in outreach programmes specifically targeted at low-income women in rural areas for the provision of training and information, as well as credit and investment funds.

33. In many countries, women play a major role in the establishment and management of forests, and are the depository of a large part of forest-related technologies, including traditional forest-related knowledge. Therefore, women are important actors as well as participants in the transfer and application of technologies for sustainable forest management. Women's roles, in all countries, need to be recognized and their participation in sustainable forest management needs to be actively supported. Much greater enrolment by women is needed in some of the traditionally more male-dominated forest-related education and training programmes.

I. Technologies for the use of wood as an energy source

34. Wood energy technologies deserve special consideration. Chapter 11 of Agenda 21 specifically addresses efficient utilization and assessment to recover the full value of the goods and services provided by forests, forest lands and woodlands. Energy use in the forest and wood sectors has two extremes. On one extreme, technologies for large-scale forest production and wood processing (including pulp and paper manufacture) have energy and waste/pollutant implications of great national and international concerns. On the other extreme, energy-saving wood and charcoal devices in households, particularly in developing countries, have significantly reduced fuelwood demands.

35. Only a small proportion of harvested wood (about one third) ends up in final processed products, such as furniture and paper. The rest of the harvested wood has great potential for supplying a substantial proportion of the world's energy needs. More efficient use of this substantial by-product of wood processing constitutes a shift towards carbon dioxide substitution through use of wood instead of fossil fuel.

36. Already, many medium and large-scale wood processing industries, primarily in developed countries, have made significant attempts to use waste and by-products to generate energy required internally by plants. In developed countries, some manufacturing plants have attained about 30 per cent energy substitution. In contrast, many wood processing plants in developing countries have made few attempts at energy substitution and increased efficient use of energy and wood. In view of the role of forest in environmental and climate stabilization, there is a need for international promotion and facilitation of technology transfer of efficient wood energy technologies, particularly in developing countries with forest products processing industries, targeted at small-scale and medium-scale operations in rural communities.

37. The forest sector in many developing countries is a dominant employer of labour. Forest-sector operations often have greater direct impact on the most economically marginalized rural populations. Wood energy technologies employ about 10 times the labour needed for fossil-energy-based technologies. Furthermore, many developing countries already have access to appropriate technologies for the use of wood as a source of energy, as well as wood collection and transportation. They often lack mechanisms, however, for efficient diffusion of these technologies to rural communities and for household applications. Adoption of wood energy technologies would have significant economic, political and social benefits.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

38. It should be noted that in several cases, the conclusions and proposals for action set out below are not new but merely reflect a need to focus on particular aspects of the proposals for action of the former IPF in the light of experience gained.

39. Although better implementation of sound technologies has great potential for enhancing the management, conservation and sustainable development of all

types of forests, technology is often not the critical limiting factor, and not every constraint to sustainable forest management can be alleviated by the transfer of technology. Indeed, policy environments favourable to sustainable forest management and the implementation of technologies are as important as the technologies themselves.

A. Forest development policy imperatives

Conclusions

40. Currently, most national forest policies do not specifically address the promotion and facilitation of investments in and transfer of environmentally sound technologies in support of sustainable forest management and for forest products industries. Interested partners, in particular the private sector, are expected to play a more prominent role in forest technology development and transfer in the future, particularly in forest-rich countries.

Preliminary proposals for action

41. IFF may wish to consider:

(a) Including the transfer of environmentally sound technologies and investment promotions in national forest programmes;

(b) Adequate policies to further the participation of interested parties in development and decision-making that affects efficient technology development, transfer and use.

B. Range of possible technologies

1. Available technologies

Conclusions

42. There are many available technologies in both developed and developing countries that could be better utilized for sustainable management of forests. Better utilization of these available technologies depends primarily on actions at the national levels with technology transfer playing a relatively small role. Developing countries need continued and enhanced international support to better utilize available technologies in forest management.

Preliminary proposals for action

43. The Forum may wish to consider specific assistance targeted at creating enabling policy environments to facilitate public and private investment in the use of environmentally sound technologies in forest management; and human capacity development.

2. Technologies needing increased transfer

Conclusions

44. Many technologies for sustainable forest management are already in use but have not yet been tested and transferred to developing countries. For some of these, there is a need for adaptive research on the limitations of their adaptation and application in developing countries.

Preliminary proposals for action

45. IFF may wish to consider:

(a) Additional investments in developing countries taking full advantage of recently developed technologies through assistance to training and minimal facilities to support their use;

(b) Addressing limitations in the patent and other intellectual property right aspects of technologies (particularly for high-value pharmaceutical and food products), and the high costs and difficulties of access to some of these technologies (particularly for satellite-based technologies).

3. Emerging technologies

Conclusions

46. There are new and emerging technologies of significant potential value for our understanding of forest ecosystems functions, that could contribute to environmentally sound management. Partnership in technology research and development will circumvent some of the technology access and transfer problems encountered by developing countries.

Proposals for action

47. The Forum may wish to consider:

(a) Strengthening support of the full participation of developing countries in ongoing research and development;

(b) Proposing ways and means to create partnerships in technology research and development in order to reduce the time gap between development and application.

C. Assessment of technology generation and needs

Conclusions

48. There have been insufficient efforts for the comprehensive assessment of technology generation and needs. Furthermore, many developing countries have weak capacities for assessment of the environmental soundness of technologies.

Preliminary proposals for action

49. The IFF may wish to consider:

(a) Including comprehensive assessment of technology needs and their transfer as a strong feature in national forests programmes;

(b) Mechanisms for sustained international support for capacity-building in technology assessment, and for the access and dissemination of information on sound technologies and equipment for the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

D. Linkages between research, technology generation and information technology

Conclusions

50. In many countries, technology generation has been initiated and has progressed satisfactorily, mainly through research efforts that address some of the common weaknesses of the transfer process, such as poor coverage, target group bias, high costs, poor and limited information content, and lack of funding. Rapidly advancing information technology continues to play a major role in catalysing technology generation.

Preliminary proposals for action

51. The Forum may wish to consider:

(a) Actions that strengthen and take increased advantage of the linkages between research and technology development of forest and forest-processing technologies, through involving users in research planning;

(b) Ways and means to assess the potential of electronic information systems/information and communication technologies, through developing techniques and methods to further integrate these technologies with ongoing communication and information networks.

E. North-South technology transfer

Conclusions

52. North-South transfer would need the collaboration and close involvement of the private-sector. It is apparent that there are still many challenges to increased private-sector investment in forestry and forest industry in developing countries, as well as in the transfer of environmentally sound technologies. There are opportunities to catalyse and support North-South technology transfer as parts of official bilateral and multilateral assistance programmes, especially for developing countries with low forest cover. Transfer of forest technologies may be constrained by broader policy issues, such as issues related to forest harvesting, where some donor agencies have limitations

in financing projects dealing with this aspect of forestry unless seen as a component of sustainable forest management.

Preliminary proposals for action

53. The Forum may wish to consider:

(a) Practical ways to promote and support the review of national policies related to investment in the forest sector, particularly incentives to promote the transfer and implementation of environmentally sound technologies;

(b) Urging developed and developing countries to specifically include forest-related technology transfer in assistance packages on terms mutually agreeable to all parties, paying particular attention to countries with low forest cover.

F. South-South and trilateral technology transfer

Conclusions

54. There are many appropriate technologies already transferred to or generated in the South that could be applied in sustainable forest management, and that are more accessible, less costly and have higher adoption potential compared with technologies from the North.

Preliminary proposals for action

55. The Forum may wish to consider:

(a) Strengthening initiatives that could accelerate the South-South and trilateral transfer of environmentally sound forest and forest products processing technologies, such as programmes on technical cooperation among developing countries and regional or interregional networks;

(b) Mechanisms to realize the potential of transfer and benefits of traditional forest-related knowledge through the development and enforcement of intellectual property rights in developing countries.

G. Technology transfer and diffusion through extension workers to private-sector agents and farmers

Conclusions

56. To date, relatively little attention has been given to the need for increased technology diffusion to end beneficiaries through extension workers. A few countries have attempted to develop effective mechanisms for the diffusion of appropriate technologies to end-users. These mechanisms have a significant potential to be emulated by a broader set of countries.

Preliminary proposals for action

57. The Forum may wish to consider practical measures to promote and support the timely diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to end-users, particularly in rural communities in developing countries, through the establishment of technology diffusion centres.

H. Gender implications

Conclusions

58. Much more focused attention should be given to gender mainstreaming related to wood energy use, tree cultivation for household use, forest tenure and ownership, sustainable forest management, and capacity-building and empowerment through access to and transfer of technology. Women's contributions, concerns and experiences must be fully taken into account in planning and implementing forest policies and programmes.

Preliminary proposals for action

59. The Forum may wish to consider:

(a) Steps to ensure opportunities for women, including indigenous and rural women, to participate in forest-related decision-making at all levels;

(b) Ensuring the use of data and information that is desegregated by sex in gender-specific sectoral surveys and studies used in the development of sustainable forest management policies and projects, so that women's rights and roles are fully reflected in decisions;

(c) Strengthening outreach programmes targeted at poor, rural women in the areas of training, small credit, and training and information related to household use of wood, woodlots for fuelwood and cooking technology;

(d) Encourage the training and education of women and girls in energy technologies and cultivation of trees for household use;

(e) Increasing efforts to enrol more women in higher education on forest-related issues, such as forestry, ecology, wood technology, pulp and paper engineering, biology and biotechnology, and chemistry and pharmacology, in both developed and developing countries.

I. Technologies for use of wood as an energy source

Conclusions

60. There is an urgent need for technological innovations to turn the currently large proportion of waste and by-products in forest logging and wood processing into an environmental good through the use of modern wood energy technologies, which could have significant impact on carbon substitution locally and globally.

Appropriate technologies for the use of wood as an energy source at the rural household level have a great potential to enhance the health and socio-economic status of women in many developing countries.

61. A shift to a reliance on modern wood energy technologies could bring with it quantum increases in employment generation and the redistribution of investment to marginalized rural populations.

Preliminary proposals for action

62. The Forum may wish to consider:

(a) Proposing international action as a logical follow-up to the Montreal Protocol, UNCED and the Kyoto Protocol, urging a shift to modern wood energy technologies as part of addressing the global concerns of carbon sequestration and substitution.

(b) Pursuing concrete actions, to be taken at individual country and forest industry levels, to use energy-efficient technologies as important criteria in assessing the environmental soundness of wood processing technologies.

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Programme element II.e (i)

Matters left pending and other issues arising from the programme elements of the IPF process

Forest-related work of international and regional organizations

Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

During the former Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) process, Governments reviewed the work of existing institutions and instruments, including their role and mandates vis-à-vis programme elements I-IV of its work programme, institutional linkages, gaps, and areas requiring enhancement, under its programme element V.1, "International organizations and multilateral institutions and instruments, including appropriate legal mechanisms". The Intergovernmental Forum on Forests is considering this matter in two parts, under its programme element II.e (i), "Forest-related work of international and regional organizations", which is covered in the present report; and programme element II.e (ii), "Forest-related work under existing instruments", which is covered in a separate report (E/CN.17/IFF/1998/11).

Chapter I of the present report provides an overview of the conclusions and proposals for action adopted by the former IPF on the issues related to its programme element V.1. Chapter II provides updated information on the forest-related work being carried out by international and regional organizations, highlighting the work of the members of the informal high-level

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Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests; by other organizations in the United Nations system, the regional commissions and relevant regional intergovernmental bodies; and other international organizations and processes. Chapter III presents preliminary conclusions and proposals for action to further strengthen cooperation and synergies on the forest-related work being carried out by international and regional organizations.

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF), in the programme of work adopted at its first session, under category II, "Considering matters left pending and other issues arising from the programme elements of the IPF process", defined programme element II.e as "Consider forest-related work of international and regional organizations", with the following mandate: "Further examine the forest-related work being carried out by international and regional organizations and under existing instruments in order to identify gaps and overlaps" (see E/CN.17/IFF/1997/4, para. 7).

2. The present report on programme element II.e (i), "Forest-related work of international and regional organizations", is complementary to the report of the Secretary-General on programme element II.e (ii), "Forest-related work under existing instruments" (E/CN.17/IFF/1998/11). It provides a summary of the most relevant and generic background information that IFF may wish to consider when examining further the forest-related work carried out by international and regional organizations. More specific information on the forest-related work of institutions is presented in the report of the Secretary-General on programme element I.a, "Promoting and facilitating the implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests" (E/CN.17/IFF/1998/2).

I. OVERVIEW OF THE CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR ACTION OF THE FORMER INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON FORESTS ON ITS PROGRAMME ELEMENT V.1

3. In its conclusions on this topic, the former Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) recognized the need to strengthen coordination among international organizations and multilateral institutions in order to provide a holistic and balanced approach to all types of forests. It also acknowledged that no single multilateral body, organization or instrument has either a mandate or the capacity to address, in a balanced, holistic and mutually reinforcing way, all issues that are currently on the international agenda with respect to all types of forests. The Panel also noted that existing forest-related legally binding instruments do not deal comprehensively with all issues relating to forests, including sustainable forest management. The Panel also agreed that in order to achieve the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests it is necessary to deal coherently with all the related social, cultural, economic, trade, environment, development, production, financial and technology issues that have a concrete impact on these objectives. The benefits of regional approaches should also be explored.

4. A number of interlinked forest-related areas needing enhanced international efforts that were recognized include improved mechanisms for focusing, coordinating and monitoring the activities of agencies and activities carried out under instruments on international forest-related issues; improved participation of major groups in forest forums and processes to promote sustainable forest management; strategic data collection and analysis; and more focused and effective funding for and coordination of research and development in priority areas concerned with sustainable forest management.

5. In its negotiated proposals for action, the Panel called on organizations to continue their work in the informal high-level Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests (ITFF), focusing on the proposals for action negotiated by IPF, in accordance with their respective mandates and comparative advantage, and proposed that ITFF should undertake further coordination and explore means for collaboration and coherent action at the international, regional and country levels.

6. The Panel also called on countries to support work on forest-related issues done by international and regional organizations and agencies and work done under relevant instruments; to clarify the mandates of the relevant international institutions and organizations related to forest issues, inter alia, through their respective governing bodies in order to improve the integration and coordination of their efforts, and to guide the activities of each organization to areas in which they can be most effective; through the respective governing bodies, to work to eliminate waste and duplication, thereby using available resources in an efficient manner; to guide relevant international and regional institutions and those administering instruments, through their governing bodies, to accelerate incorporation into their relevant work programmes of the forest-related results of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), of further progress achieved since then and proposals for action adopted by IPF.

II. FOREST-RELATED WORK BEING CARRIED OUT BY INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

7. The present chapter updates information on forest-related work carried out by international and regional organizations. It does not attempt an assessment of forest activities of selected organizations. The information compiled is based on a questionnaire sent to all members of ITFF, a wide spectrum of institutions of the United Nations system, regional organizations, including economic commissions, regional development banks and other intergovernmental bodies, as well as several non-governmental organizations of recognized experience in forest-related activities. A list of the 42 international and regional organizations to which the questionnaire was sent is contained in the annex. Detailed responses were received from 29 institutions. Due to limitation of space, it is not possible to provide all the available information in the present report.

A. Informal high-level Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests

8. IPF gave unanimous support for the continuation of the ITFF and the continuation of the IPF secretariat based on staff secondments, which was clearly seen as a very innovative and successful mechanism.[1] The main objective of ITFF is to secure and coordinate support from its members for IPF/IFF in a manner that builds on the agencies' respective strengths, minimizes duplication and overlap, makes most efficient use of existing resources, and fosters partnership and collaboration. ITFF addresses forest issues at the global and regional levels but also assists many countries in national-level implementation of the IPF proposals for action.

9. ITFF has met on several occasions during the IPF and IFF processes mostly in connection with preparation for the meetings of the Panel and Forum and the FAO Committee on Forestry. At the first session of IFF, in October 1997, ITFF met with the non-governmental organization community, where it was agreed to have regular consultations between ITFF and non-governmental organizations at future IFF meetings. To further facilitate this process of mutual consultations, the non-governmental organizations agreed to nominate a focal point. The next meeting of ITFF will take place at the margins of the second session of IFF. ITFF is Chaired by FAO.

1. The Inter-Agency Partnership on Forests: a plan to implement the proposals for action of the former Intergovernmental Panel on Forests

10. This plan was prepared collectively by the members of ITFF to support the implementation of the IPF proposals for action, mainly as a response to paragraph 145 of the report of IPF on its fourth session (E/CN.17/1997/12), in which the Panel called upon the appropriate international institutions and organizations to continue their work in the informal high-level Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests, under the chairmanship of FAO as task manager for chapter 11 of Agenda 21, focusing on the proposals for action recommended by the Panel, in accordance with their respective mandates and comparative advantage.

11. The objective of the plan is to support the efforts of countries to implement the IPF proposals for action through well executed and coordinated activities by ITFF members, in association with other international organizations, multilateral institutions and instruments, addressing needs at the national, regional and international levels. In particular, the plan identifies: (a) areas where concrete and coordinated action by ITFF member organizations is feasible and practical; (b) means by which existing resources can be used more effectively and efficiently; and (c) opportunities for participation by other potential partners, such as non-governmental organizations, private industry and other international organizations, for a more effective response to assisting Governments in the implementation of IPF's proposals for action.

12. The IFF secretariat has continued to promote the full implementation of the plan among all interested parties. It is recognized that the plan constitutes an important tool for ITFF to contribute in a collaborative and coordinated manner to the implementation of IPF proposals for action. The institutional arrangements established among ITFF members for supporting the implementation of IPF proposals for action are summarized in table 2.

13. The total annual cost of implementation of the plan, as tentatively estimated by ITFF, is approximately US$ 50 million, increasing slightly from US$ 45 million in phase I (present-2000) and US$ 50 million in phase II (2001-2005) to US$ 55 million in phase III (2006-2010). It should be noted that this is just a rough estimate made by ITFF to show the level of resources required to initiate a collective response for the implementation of the IPF proposals for action that are addressed to international organizations and agencies. Although these figures include some funds already available in

regular programme budgets and trust funds of members of ITFF, they are primarily indicative figures of the level of additional funds yet to be sought from external sources.

2. Support for the secretariat of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests

14. The IFF secretariat continues with basically the same level of staffing, composed of senior officers on loan to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Only the Coordinator and Head of the secretariat and two support staff are hired directly by the United Nations. FAO, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, ITTO, UNDP and UNEP have each provided a senior staff member to the IFF secretariat. This arrangement has demonstrated several advantages, including relatively rapid deployment of experienced staff on an ad hoc basis, in accordance with the nature and mandate of IFF; a de facto inter-agency coordination function within the secretariat; and the ability of the IFF secretariat to draw on the full institutional capacity of ITFF members.

B. Potential institutional synergies to support the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests process

1. International organizations: United Nations system

15. In addition to the work being carried out by ITFF members, very significant supporting work in the field of forests is being carried out by several organizations of the United Nations system (for list, see annex). The work being supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through its technical and financial assistance to developing countries in the field of biodiversity strategies and action plans can have a positive impact in strengthening national forest programmes and vice versa. The work of the United Nations University and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in supporting forest-related research, conservation ecology, interrelationships between forests, society and the environment, and traditional knowledge are also relevant to supporting implementation of the IFF mandate. Similarly, the substantive contributions that organizations such as the World Intellectual Property Organization and the World Trade Organization could make to the Forum in dealing with issues related to traditional knowledge, trade and environment, and valuation of forest goods and services must be taken into account at the moment of "forging institutional synergies" with respect to specific programme elements.

2. Regional organizations

16. Regional commissions. The forest-related work being carried out by the regional commissions and other regional intergovernmental organizations is relevant for most of the IFF programme elements. Examples are the work of the regional commissions, such as the Economic Commission for Europe and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in data collection, research and information relating to national forest programmes, polluted areas,

supply and demand, forest conservation, criteria and indicators, valuation and economic instruments, the work of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean on the role of fiscal and other incentives in planted forests, paper industry, watershed management; and the work of the Economic Commission for Africa on soil erosion and the underlying causes of deforestation and destruction of land resources.

17. Regional development banks. The regional development banks focus their loans and technical assistance grants on a wide array of activities, including capacity-building, policy analysis, training, and research and information, covering almost all IPF and IFF programme elements. All of them assist countries in their national forest programmes, forest conservation, biodiversity, underlying causes of deforestation, economic instruments, valuation, environmentally sound technologies and forest investments. For example, the Inter-American Development Bank focuses its activities on polluted areas, national forestry development, forest conservation, and investments on industrial plantations and commercial forest management. The African Development Bank focuses on national programmes, low forest cover, conservation, underlying causes of deforestation, supply and demand of forest products and services, and forest products industry. It is important to note that all regional development banks have financial and technical assistance activities, including capacity-building and policy analysis on legal aspects of forests.

18. Regional research cooperation institutions. At the regional level, the European Forest Institute (EFI) has programmes in four priority areas closely related to the IFF programme: forest ecology and management; forest products, markets and socio economics; forest policy analysis; and forest resources and information. At the subregional level, the Central American Council of Forests and Protected Areas (CCAB-AP) constitutes another type of mechanism to influence sustainable forest management. CCAB-AP is primarily a subregional technical body for implementing the policies for sustainable use of forest resources in the subregion. Its main objectives are to negotiate funding from international donors; promote sustainable forestry and biological conservation policies; consolidate proposed protected areas; implement timber concessions policies and guidelines; and design and foster analytical forestry legislation. The working liaison of EFI and CCAB-AP with ITFF and other international organizations could notably strengthen the promotion and implementation of the IPF proposals for action in their regions. Possible areas of cooperation include protected areas, traditional knowledge, criteria and indicators, valuation, environmentally sound technologies, forest investments and legal regimes.

3. Other international organizations and processes

19. The information on this group includes the work of six forest-specific organizations and arrangements (International Center for Research in Agroforestry, International Union of Forestry Research Organizations, the Forest Stewardship Council, the criteria and indicators processes, International Wood Products Association) and the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forest in Europe, as well as seven forest-related international organizations (International Institute for Environment and Development, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the World Conservation Union, World

Conservation Monitoring Centre, World Resources Institute, World Wide Fund for Nature, World Business Council for Sustainable Development). Each of these organizations and processes are outside ITFF and the United Nations System. They collectively represent major institutional efforts to establish partnerships with a wide spectrum of national and regional non-governmental organizations, indigenous peoples organizations, the private sector and other major groups. They promote and implement the international forest agenda at the local, national, regional and global levels. Due to space limitations, it was not possible to refer to all non-governmental organizations and their networks in the present report. It is recognized, however, that they have a major role to play in the implementation of IFF-related activities and IPF proposals for action. Collectively, their national and international activities cover a large part of the IPF and IFF programme elements. Many of them are working in partnerships with the members of ITFF.

20. Several established international initiatives to develop criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management (e.g., the Montreal Process, the Helsinki Process, the International Tropical Timber Organization Process) are now reaching an implementation stage. Meanwhile, new initiatives that have been started include the Tarapoto Process, the Dry Zone of Africa initiative, and the initiative in the Near East region. All these initiatives are considering criteria and indicators at the national level, and some countries have already implemented these criteria and indicators for monitoring the sustainability of their forest management and development. At the local level, some progress has been achieved in a limited number of countries. Forest management unit-level criteria and indicators have been tested with the participation of one of the ITFF members, the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) in a few temperate and tropical countries. Some countries have established forest management pilot projects, which include the testing and implementation of forest management unit-level criteria and indicators. Countries with a long historical tradition in forest management, particularly in Europe, have introduced new criteria of sustainability in their forest management unit-level practices.

21. At the G-8 meeting of Heads of State at Denver in June 1997, the seven major industrialized countries and the Russian Federation launched the Forest Action Programme and called for immediate implementation of the IPF proposals for action. This commitment was reiterated in the G-8 meeting held at Birmingham in May 1998. The Action Programme has five components: implementation of national forest programmes; establishing networks of protected areas; assessing the state of each (G-8) nation's forests, using agreed criteria and indicators; promoting private-sector management of forests; and eliminating illegal logging. The International Wood Products Association is advancing programmes for responsible forest management and international trade in wood products. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is currently working in forestry within its activities on OECD environmental performance, statistics and indicators; official development assistance flows to the forestry sector; a scheme for the control of forest reproductive material moving in international trade; genetically engineered crop plants and tree species; and on the linkages between agriculture and forestry.

22. The World Bank is the convener of a "CEOs process", in association with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the World Resources Institute (WRI), Conservation International, the World Conservation Union and a number of private-sector companies involved in forest products manufacturing (Apkindo, Aracruz Cellulose, Collins Pine Danzer etc.) related to forest reserves and sustainable forest management. In 1997, the World Bank also formed an alliance with WWF aimed at collaboration around two sets of quantitative targets: (a) to promote the establishment of an ecologically representative network of protected areas, covering at least 10 per cent of each of the world's major forest types by the year 2000 (the Bank has adopted a specific target of establishing 50 million hectares of new forest protected areas in its client countries by 2005); and (b) to cooperate to achieve independent certification of 200 million hectares of well managed production forests by 2005, 100 million in temperate and boreal forest regions and 100 million in tropical forest regions.

23. WRI has recently launched the Global Forest Watch as an independent mechanism to monitor the status and trends related to the world's remaining frontier forests, including monitoring the direct and underlying causes of deforestation in these areas. WWF is undertaking a series of case studies on the socioeconomic causes of biodiversity loss. Case studies will be carried out in a variety of locations with a diversity of social and economic conditions. This activity is being developed by the Macroeconomics for Sustainable Development Programme. The World Conservation Union is implementing programmes on conservation, valuation, biodiversity and protected areas, including information and policy work in partnership with WWF. The International Institute for Environment and Development is focusing its activities on forest policy and national policy processes, the sustainability of the pulp and paper industry, development of assessment tools and systems that provide information to policy makers and planners, and incentives for sustainable forestry and land use.

24. There are many opportunities for the Forum to link up with the efforts of all these partnerships and alliances, and to invite them to support and to collaborate with ITFF in the implementation of the IPF proposals for action. The potential institutional synergies to support the IPF/IFF processes are identified in table 2, which was prepared on the basis of the information compiled in the survey on the forest-related work carried out by international and regional organizations. Most of the activities being implemented by other international organizations and processes and regional organizations are complementary to ITFF efforts and the IFF programme of work, and offer an excellent opportunity for the Forum to forge institutional synergies for the benefit of the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

III. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

A. Preliminary conclusions

1. Strengthening the Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests

25. As a partnership mechanism in the field of forests, ITFF has been successful in initiating and strengthening forest-related collaboration among organizations within and outside the United Nations. Analysis of the information compiled by the survey undertaken by the IFF secretariat has shown that the forest-related work-programmes of ITFF members collectively cover the totality of programme elements in the international agenda on forests, as defined by the IPF and IFF processes. The focus within the work programmes of ITFF members include such areas as technical-operational (UNDP, FAO, CIFOR, World Bank); policy making (ITTO, FAO, UNEP); coordinating (UNEP, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Convention on Biological Diversity); financial support (World Bank, UNDP); and normative (ITTO, the Convention on Biological Diversity, UNEP). In addition to the recognition accorded by IPF, the Commission on Sustainable Development and the General Assembly at its nineteenth special session, ITFF has also been noted as an innovative approach by the Inter-Agency Committee for Sustainable Development charged with coordinating the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and Agenda 21 by the United Nations system.

26. ITFF, as a new informal partnership mechanism, requires a strong institutional back-up from each of its member's organizations and their respective governing bodies. The strengthening of ITFF is primarily needed for implementing the IPF proposals for action, which are recognized as the internationally agreed priorities for forests (see E/CN.17/IFF/1998/2).

27. In the context of the implementation of the IPF proposals for action, the issue is not to insist on identifying overlaps and areas of duplication, or gaps in action among different members of ITFF or among other international and regional organizations. The real challenges ahead are to strengthen further the existing partnership among ITFF, members and to facilitate the establishment of new modalities of cooperation between ITFF members and other partners for making the best use of all the available forest-related institutional capabilities that exist at the regional and international levels. These institutional capabilities (see table 2) should be fully mobilized and utilized to support the efforts of countries to implement the IPF proposals for action.

2. Forging synergies

28. The IPF process emphasized the notion that forest policy and sustainable forest management must take into account the multiple benefits of forests at the national, regional and global levels, as well as recognize the high diversity of institutions involved in issues related to forests. In this regard, a better understanding of the work being carried out by different international and regional organizations will represent an important contribution towards the strengthening of the institutional synergies and will ensure more integrated

approaches, rather than continuing with the fragmented views on forest policies, programmes and institutions that prevails to date.

29. There is a significantly unrealized potential for further strengthening the commitment and mobilizing the capacity of existing international and regional organizations to support and promote the goal of the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. This can be achieved through the enhancement of their complementarities, and better coordination and facilitation of the policy dialogue to ensure greater coherence of action, including consistent policy guidance by involving their governing bodies. This approach would help to focus collective action on jointly agreed priorities.

30. There are numerous international activities and programmes related to forests undertaken by international and regional organizations and other non-governmental organizations. There is a need to encourage the forging of partnerships with all of these international and regional organizations in selected IPF/IFF programme elements.

31. Improved institutional partnerships will also be essential for the monitoring, reviewing and assessing progress in the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests (see E/CN.17/IFF/1998/6). Shared objectives on forest-related issues for promoting work among institutions is crucial for improving efficiency and coordination. Future efforts in international organizations, multilateral institutions and instruments should concentrate on making monitoring and reporting activities more effective and flexible to accommodate emerging needs. This approach should also provide for effective participation of and collaboration with the non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

32. The Forum may wish to consider how to fully utilize the existing institutional capabilities of ITFF and other potential partners to support actions needing enhanced international efforts. Priority areas include capacity-building; technology transfer and exchange; institutional and human resource development, in particular at the national and field levels; funding and coordination for research and development on national priorities for sustainable forest management; pilot projects of regional and international significance; and strategic forest data collection and dissemination of information.

33. The experience gained in preparing the survey of forest-related work has shown the need to design a comprehensive directory of forest-related international and regional organizations as a database for future reference by the Forum in all matters related to the forest-related work. The directory could include the available institutional information concerning missions, mandates, organizational structures, programmes, activities and budget. It is suggested that such a database also become accessible to all Governments and other interested parties in electronic form, such as via the Internet. This directory could also include detailed information about decisions by the governing bodies of each organization, meetings, project implementation and other relevant information. Additional information about bilateral and multilateral forest-related activities and private-sector and research institutions could also be included.

B. Preliminary proposals for action

1. Supporting the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/ Intergovernmental Forum on Forests processes

34. The Forum may wish to call upon all interested parties, including the governing bodies of relevant international and regional organizations to:

(a) Identify practical means for mobilizing their diverse strengths and capabilities to support country-level efforts in implementing the proposals for action adopted by IPF;

(b) Foster synergies among different international and regional organizations and instruments, ensuring their active participation in and contribution to forest policy dialogue within the framework of IFF, and to the internationally agreed agenda on forests.

2. Strengthening the Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests

35. The Forum may wish to call upon ITFF member organizations to:

(a) Ensure that partnership arrangements be communicated throughout the organizational structure of the members' organizations;

(b) Inform their governing bodies about the outcome of the IPF/IFF process, and encourage them to strengthen forest-related activities and the inter-agency cooperation in this field;

(c) Explore the potentialities for institutional synergies with other partners, especially the regional development banks, regional commissions and other regional intergovernmental bodies, non-governmental organizations, and other international organizations;

(d) Design a comprehensive directory of forest-related international and regional organizations engaged in forest-related activities, as a database for future reference by the Forum in all matters related to forests.

3. Forging synergies

36. The Forum may wish to call upon the governing bodies of United Nations agencies, regional organizations and other international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to:

(a) Facilitate inter-institutional consultation on cross-sectoral forest policies, policy reforms, and planning and programmes for sustainable forest management;

(b) Enhance strategic data sets and analysis systems to allow the preparation and timely dissemination of user-friendly macro-parameters for monitoring and reporting on progress in sustainable forest management practices;

(c) Establish a global forest research network, making full use of existing institutions, including the identification of mechanisms for an effective flow of research results to those engaged in policy and implementation.

37. The above conclusions and proposals for action are preliminary in nature. Considering that many institutional and legal issues are closely interrelated, the final conclusions and proposals for action under programme element II.e (i) would take into account the outcome of the substantive discussions under category III of the IFF programme of work scheduled for the third session of IFF.

Notes

[1] ITFF members are: the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity; the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR); the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO); the Department for Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat; the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); and the World Bank.

Annex

LIST OF FOREST-RELATED INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTRUMENTS

Inter-agency task force on forests

Center for International Forestry Research

International Tropical Timber Organization

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

World Bank

Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat

United Nations Development Programme

United Nations Environment Programme

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

International organizations/United Nations system

Global Environment Facility

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

International Labour Organization

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

United Nations University

World Food Programme

World Intellectual Property Organization

World Meteorological Organization

World Trade Organization

Regional organizations

Regional commissions

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Economic Commission for Africa

Economic Commission for Europe

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Regional intergovernmental bodies

African Development Bank

Asian Development Bank

Central American Council of Forest and Protected Areas

European Forest Institute

Inter-American Development Bank

Organization of American States

Other international organizations and processes

International Centre for Research in Agro-Forestry

International Institute for Environment and Development

International Union of Forest Research Organizations

International Wood Products Association

Montreal and other criteria and indicators processes, including the Forest Stewardship Council

Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

The World Conservation Union and associated non-governmental organizations

World Conservation Monitoring Centre

World Resources Institute

World Wide Fund for Nature International and associated non-governmental organizations

World Business Council for Sustainable Development

Table 1. Inter-Agency Partnership on Forests

	IPF programme element	ITFF lead agency	Partners within ITFF	Proposed partners outside ITFF
I.1	Progress through national forest and land-use programmes	FAO	UNDP, UNEP, World Bank, ITTO, Convention on Biological Diversity	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, UNIDO
I.2	Underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation	UNEP	UNDP, FAO, CIFOR, Convention on Biological Diversity, ITTO	ICRAF, IUCN
I.3	Traditional forest-related knowledge	Convention on Biological Diversity	FAO, UNEP, UNDP, ITTO, DESA, World Bank	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, ILO, IADB, ASDB, AFDB, WIPO, UNESCO, WTO, UNIDO, UNCTAD, UNU
I.4	Part one: fragile ecosystems affected by desertification and drought	FAO	UNDP, UNEP, Convention on Biological Diversity	UNSO, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
I.4	Part two: impact of airborne pollution on forests	FAO	UNEP, Convention on Biological Diversity	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
I.5	Needs and requirements of countries with low forest cover	UNEP	FAO, Convention on Biological Diversity, World Bank	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, regional development banks

	IPF programme element	ITFF lead agency	Partners within ITFF	Proposed partners outside ITFF
II	International cooperation in financial assistance and technology transfer for sustainable forest management	UNDP	World Bank, Convention on Biological Diversity, ITTO, FAO, UNEP	Regional development banks
III.1(a)	Part one: assessment of the multiple benefits of all types of forests	FAO	UNEP, ITTO, CIFOR	ECE
	Part two: forestry research	CIFOR	FAO, Convention on Biological Diversity	IUFRO, ICRAF, UNU, International Boreal Forest Research Association, EFI, WCMC
III.1(b)	Methodologies for the proper valuation of the multiple benefits of forests	World Bank	(Not yet consulted) FAO, CIFOR, Convention on Biological Diversity, ITTO, UNEP	EFI, HIID
III.2	Criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management	FAO	UNEP, ITTO, UNDP, Convention on Biological Diversity, CIFOR, World Bank	UNESCO, IUFRO, IUCN, WWF, regional development banks
IV	Trade and environment relating to forest goods and services	ITTO	FAO, UNEP	UNCTAD, WTO

Source: "Inter-Agency Partnership on Forests: a plan to implement IPF proposals for action", Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests, New York, June 1997.

Table 2. Potential institutional synergies to support the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests process

	IPF programme element	ITFF lead agency	Main partners within ITFF	Other potential partners
I.a.	Promote and facilitate implementation of the proposals for action of IPF	See annex	See annex	See annex
I.b.	Monitor progress in implementation of IPF proposals for action	See annex	See annex	See annex
II.a.	Need for financial resources	UNDP	World Bank, DESA, UNDP	GEF, UNIDO, AFDB, ASDB, CACF/PA, IADB, OECD, WWF
II.b.	Trade and environment	ITTO	UNEP, FAO	UNCTAD, WTO, ECE, ECLAC, AFDB, ASDB, EFI, IADB, IHPA, OECD, WBCSD, FSC
II.c.	Transfer of technology	FAO	UNEP, World Bank, Convention on Biological Diversity, ITTO, UNDP	ILO, UNIDO, ICRAF, IHPA, WBCSD
II.d.	Issues needing further clarification		UNDP, CIFOR, ITTO, Convention on Biological Diversity, FAO	UNESCO, UNU, ECA, ADB, CACF/PA, IUCN, WRI, WWF
	Underlying causes of deforestation	UNEP		
	Traditional forest-related knowledge	Convention on Biological Diversity	CIFOR, ITTO, FAO, UNEP, World Bank	UNESCO, AFDB, ASDB, IADB, WRI, IUFRO, IUCN, UNU, CACF/PA, WIPO, WTO, UNIDO, UNCTAD, ILO
	Rehabilitation of forest cover	FAO	UNEP, UNDP	UNESCO, UNU, WFP, ECA, AFDB, IADB, ICRAF, IUCN
	Forest conservation	UNEP	FAO, ITTO, CIFOR, Convention on Biological Diversity, World Bank	UNESCO, ECA, ESCAP, AFDB, ASDB, IADB, IUCN, WWF, WRI, WCMC

	IPF programme element	ITFF lead agency	Main partners within ITFF	Other potential partners
	Research priorities	CIFOR	FAO, UNEP, Convention on Biological Diversity, ITTO, World Bank	UNESCO, IUFRO, IUCN, WRI, GEF, UNU, WIPO, WMO, ICRAF, IIED, EFI, AFDB, ASDB
	Valuation of forest goods and services	World Bank	UNEP, FAO, CIFOR, CBD, ITTO, UNDP	GEF, UNCTAD, UNU, WTO, AFDB, ASDB, IUCN, OECD, WRI, WBCSD
	Economic instruments, tax policies and land tenure	World Bank	UNEP, FAO, Convention on Biological Diversity, ITTO, UNDP	GEF, UNU, ESCAP, ESCWA, ECA, ECE, ECLAC, IUCN, OECD, WRI, WBCSD
	Supply and demand of wood and non-wood forest products and services	FAO	ITTO, UNEP, Convention on Biological Diversity	AFDB, ASDB, IADB, UNESCO, OECD, WRI, IUCN
II.e	Forest-related work of organizations	DESA	All	All
III	Identify elements, build a global consensus and engage in further action	DESA	ITTO, Convention on Biological Diversity, UNEP	WIPO, WTO, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change